The Dark Side

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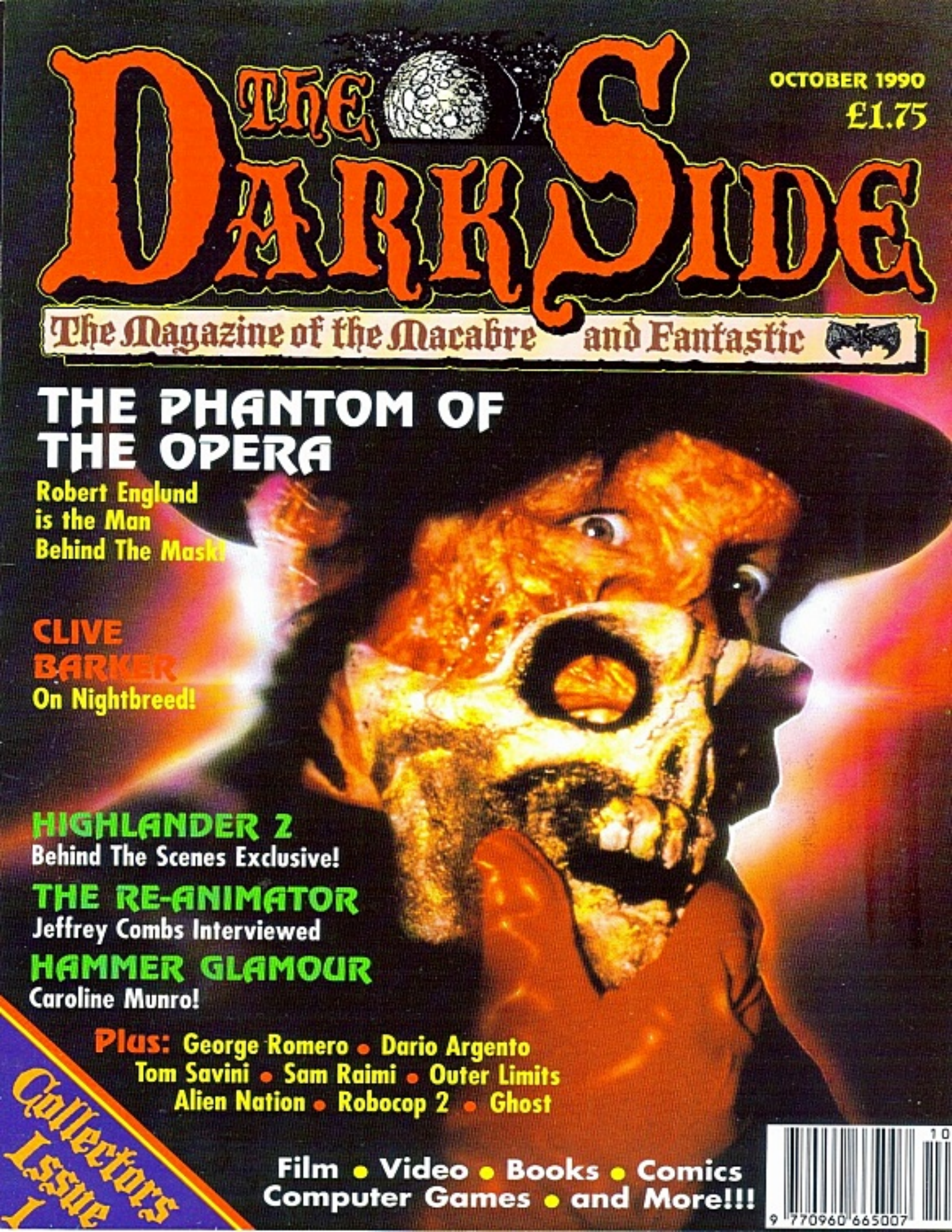
The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic



THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Robert Englund is the Man Behind The Mask!

CLIVE BARKER

On Nightbreed!

HIGHLANDER 2

Behind The Scenes Exclusive!

THE RE-ANIMATOR

Jeffrey Combs Interviewed

HAMMER GLAMOUR

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Publisher and Managing Editor: Chris Adam-Smith
Designer: Jeff Gurney
Advertisement Manager: Simon Forrester
Assistant Advertisement Manager: Adrienne Gilliver

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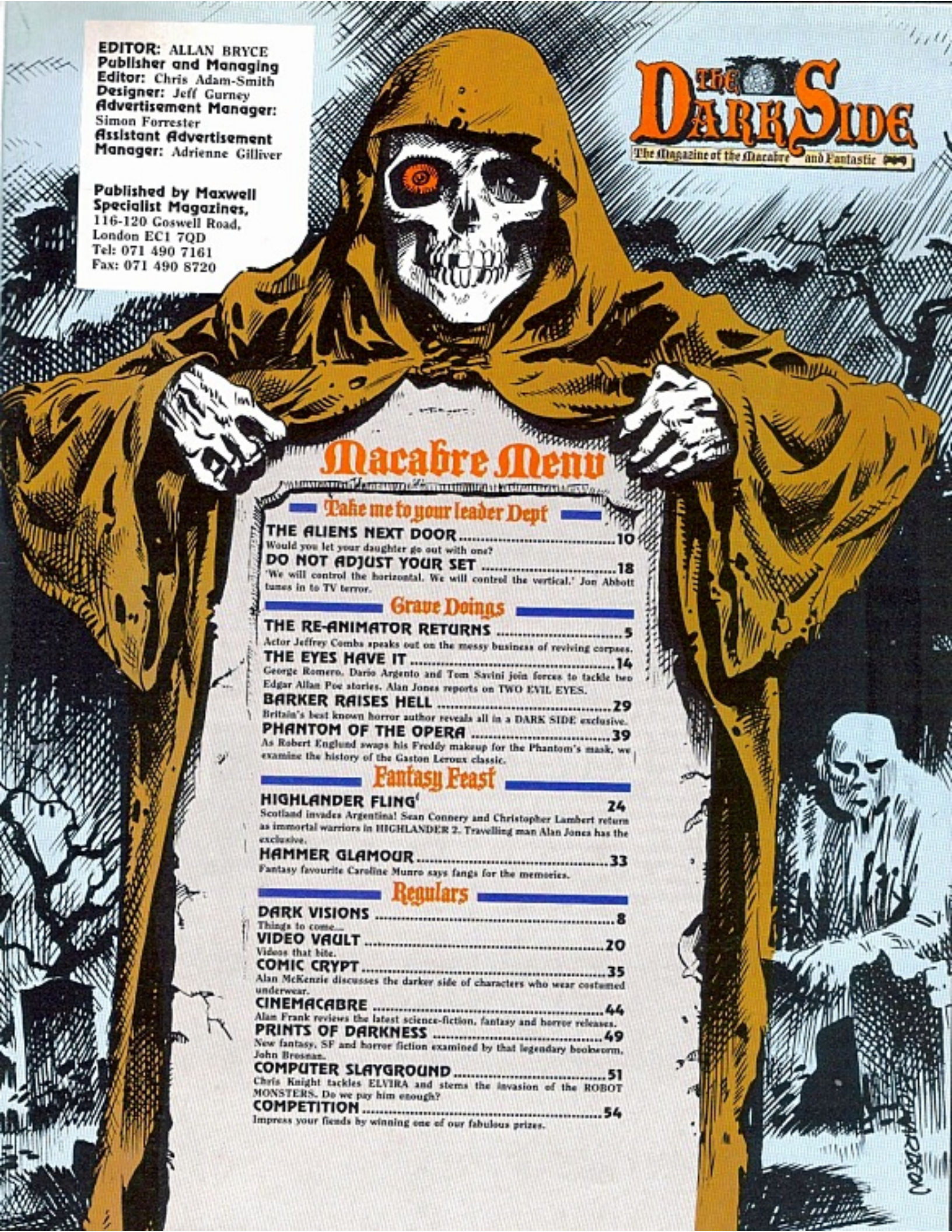

The Dark Side

The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic

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THE DARK SIDE
The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic

Introduction

You are going on a journey. A journey to the slippery edge that marks the murky abyss of the unpredictable unconsciousness. One look into those dark depths can mean a convulsive, shrieking plunge into horror, or it can mean an inspiration. For it is here on the tremulous border of relative light and unspeakable darkness that the mundane, the maniacal and the miraculous meet and mingle with the stuff of fantasy – the stuff of which **THE DARK SIDE** is made!

As you step into this dark and wonderful world you will be accosted by hideously scarred phantoms, immortal creatures that live on blood, alien chest-bursters, ghastly gremlins, and other better known monsters that have stalked their way through the imagination for years. The beginnings of your worst nightmares...

Your guides on this wondrous voyage are some of the finest genre writers around, experts on the creepy terrain of The Dark Side. Writers like leading film critic Alan Frank, author of the bestselling **HORROR FILM HANDBOOK**, book critic John Brosnan, himself a popular science-fiction author, and the near-legendary Alan Jones, a man who has probably been on more film sets than Donald Pleasance and David Carradine combined! Then there's Chris Knight, editor of the popular Amstrad Computer User, exploring the dark side of computer games, comic book supremo Alan McKenzie, a former editor of the popular Amstrad Computer User, exploring the dark side of computer games, comic book supremo Alan McKenzie, a former editor of **STARBUST**, and Jon Abbott, one of Britain's leading experts on the U.S. television scene. Trying to keep this lot under control will be me, Allan Bryce, a long-term contributor to Britain's best film and video related horror magazines.

Each month from now on, we will introduce you to the writers, the stars, and the filmmakers, and take you behind the scenes of the latest Horrorwood epics. We will bring you our informed opinions on the new books, comics, computer games and TV shows, and, knowing genre fans to be a highly opinionated bunch, I'm sure you will write in and let us know whether you think we've got them right or wrong!

A glance through the contents of this first issue will hopefully reveal something for all tastes, from exclusive reports on the filming of **HIGHLANDER 2** and the long-awaited Romero/Argento collaboration, **TWO EVIL EYES**, to interviews with Clive Barker and **RE-ANIMATOR** star Jeffrey Combs, TV science-fiction old and new, Hammer glamour, Phantoms we have known and loved, and a whole lot more of the stuff that screams are made of. Remember, your own contributions are always welcome, especially for our 'End in Fright' series of shivery short stories. Who knows, we may even discover a future Clive Barker out there? That's enough from me. Now it's time to draw back the curtain on the Dark Side. Enter at your own risk...

Allan Bryce

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RETURN OF THE RE-ANIMATOR

Mad medico Herbert West is back for more macabre experiments. Allan Bryce shares a jolt of re-animation juice with the man who brought Herbert to life – actor Jeffrey Combs.

You know how it is. You get up in the morning, go to the morgue, re-animate a few corpses. Have lunch, go back and re-animate a few more. But there's got to be a better life after death than that. Which is why RE-ANIMATOR II (out on Medusa Video this month) finds Herbert West looking for a bit of female company. No longer satisfied with the boring old business of bringing the dead back to life, Herbert's latest brainstorm is to create a totally new being from various body parts he just happens to have lying around the laboratory. But of course his plans to knock together a fabulous blind date go more than slightly askew, and he ends up with the girl of his screams rather than the girl of his dreams.

The original RE-ANIMATOR was one of the most deliriously demented horror movies of the 80s, and an extremely tough act to follow. When Herbert started injecting his patented day-glo green serum into every dead body in sight it also gave the genre a much-needed shot in the arm that brought it screaming and kicking to new life. But everyone feared the worst about the sequel, because as actor Jeffrey Combs is the first to admit: 'Sequels ALWAYS suck!'

But though the followup is also based on one of H.P. Lovecraft's six original Herbert West short stories, it owes a far greater debt to the Frankenstein legend. The sequel to the original Frankenstein movie was called THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, and the original American title of this one was BRIDE OF THE RE-ANIMATOR. 'Mary Shelley is the real inspiration here,' states Combs. 'Her themes are what give the second film a real sense of grandeur.'

The story begins in the aftermath of the notorious 'Miskatonic Morgue Massacre,' and has West and his assistant Dan Cain (Bruce Abbott) visiting South America to get hold of an amniotic fluid drawn from a particular breed of iguana that helps retard tissue and limb rejection. West has thriftily saved the heart of Dan's dead girlfriend Meg (Barbara Crampton –

who doesn't appear in the sequel), and plans to kick-start it back to life in the body of his new bride, played in full prosthetic body-suit by Kathleen (HALLOWEEN 4) Kinmont. Then the fun really starts.

'I'm really charged up by this movie,' grins Combs, an intense young fellow with piercing eyes who looks younger than his 35 years. 'It tries to keep the unique philosophical integrity of Herbert West intact. There's a progression here in thought, story and ideas. It's like going from algebra to calculus.'

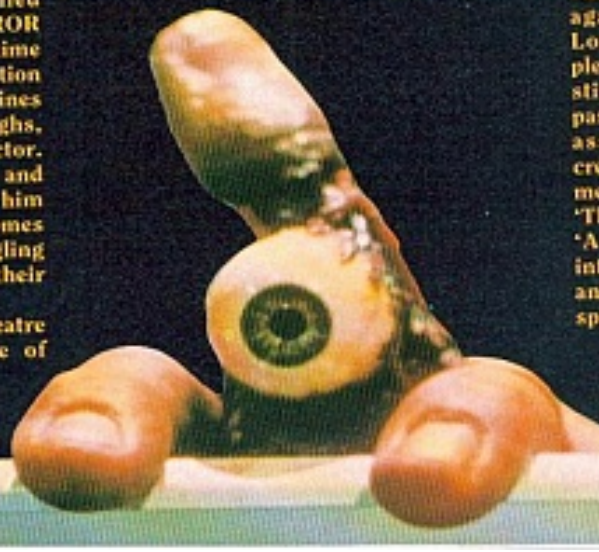
As obsessive about his acting career as his alter-ego Herber is about reviving stiffs, Jeffrey came to Los Angeles ten years ago as a struggling young stage actor seeking work in movies. 'It has been hell ever since!,' he says with a sinister Herbert West chuckle.

He started as he meant to go on, with a minor role in a horror movie called FRIGHTMARE (known as THE HORROR STAR in the UK). One review of the time called this, 'Worthless in both conception and performance,' and the actor inclines to agree. 'It was a dreadful film,' he sighs, 'about an old, Karloff-type horror actor. He dies, and his fan club decide to go and steal his body and throw a party for him with his corpse, which of course comes back to life!' He shrugs. 'Every struggling young actor has movies like that in their closet.'

After doing some television and theatre work, Jeffrey was offered the role of Herbert West in RE-ANIMATOR. But he had no idea at the start that this movie would become such a classic of the horror genre. 'I needed the money badly,' he admits. 'To be honest, it looked like jut any another low budget horror flick. I read the script and I thought well, alright, I have to pay the rent so I'll do this thing. No-one will ever see it anyway. How wrong could I be?'

He lays credit for the first movie's success at the door of director Stuart Gordon. 'It was his first film, and he brought such a unique outlook, style and sense of fun to it that it couldn't help to come off like it did. You know, it's really curious because when we were filming it he seemed to be taking it very seriously. I know it was quite ridiculous – the decapitated body carrying the head around and all that – but I always got the sense that that would not be something that audiences would find funny. It was mainstream grand guignol horror, and certainly not 'camp'. But after the film was put together, the 'campy' elements showed themselves, and of course everyone insisted that that was what they planned all along.'

The next time Gordon and Combs worked together was on a movie called FROM BEYOND (available on Vestron video), a more serious and sombre work, again drawn from the pen of H.P. Lovecraft. Once more the gore was plentiful as scientist Combs attempted to stimulate the pineal gland and see into a parallel dimension inhabited by a vast assortment of weird (and hungry) creatures. Unfortunately though, it did not meet with the same boxoffice success. 'The mix was not right' explains the actor. 'A good horror movie has to have interesting characters, a really good story, and the third element nowdays is the special effects. These elements all have to carefully be balanced. In FROM BEYOND,



the balance was weighed too heavily in favour of the special effects. There were scenes that were cut that reduced the story and character development for the sake of getting a little more goo on the screen!'

After that, Jeffrey fell in with notorious low budget film maestro Fred Olen Ray, who cast him as the hero in CYCLONE (Entertainment In Video), a poverty row thriller about a super-powered motor cycle that made the TV show STREETHAWK look positively inspired by comparison. Then he teamed up with Fred again for THE PHANTOM EMPIRE (Vestron), which was a real hoot of an exploitation fantasy about a bunch of 'B' movie actors who enter a cave in a Los Angeles park and emerge into a very tacky primeval lost world inhabited by Robby the Robot, and the larger-than-life Sybil Danning, poured into an outfit that definitely brings out the bust in her.

'I'd sooner forget about the whole affair' says the actor, shaking his head. 'Fred called me up and said, "Look, I'm putting up my own money and I'm going to make this movie in one week because that's all the money that I have." I like challenges, you know? I thought let's try it and see what can be done in a week. I found out!'

At least these movies actually made it to the video market, while other Combs projects like a Charlie Band picture called EVIL CLERGYMAN – one of Band's PULSE POUNDERS trilogy – seems to have become a casualty of the financial collapse of Band's Empire Pictures and is still sitting on a shelf awaiting completion. A similar thing happened to another of his movies entitled DEAD MEN WALKING, a low-rent zombie flick which also features the ubiquitous Wings Hauser.

After all these unambitious projects it was small wonder he was so pleased to get involved with RE-ANIMATOR II. 'It was like going home again' he concurs, 'only this time I knew up front what I was getting involved with. As I said before, what I like about it is the progression of ideas. In the first one Herbert was just interested in bringing back the dead. In this one the evolution in his thinking is: "Okay, if I can bring back various parts of the dead, and connect them, then we can make an entirely new creature, bigger and better than ever."

And as with all sequels, this $2.5 million effort offers bigger and better special effects to please the fans. The 'Bride's body suit took six hours to apply, and if the sliced and diced corpses you see lying around Herbert's lab look uncomfortably realistic to you, that's because makeup stalwarts such as Greg Nicotero, Tony Doublin, and the unforgettable Screaming Mad George did a lot of homework studying illustrated pathology handbooks and looking over autopsy cadavers. 'We went crazy with the effects' says Combs, 'but you can't go far ENOUGH for today's audiences!'

At the moment Jeffrey is 'resting', that kindly euphemism that actors use for being out of work. But he feels sure that he'll be back on our screens soon, 'probably in some horror picture or other.' He confesses that he would dearly love to do RE-ANIMATOR III if the chance arose. 'It's a possibility,' he shrugs, 'but no script has yet been written. I guess they're just waiting to see how this one goes. It would certainly be nice, because I'd like to continue exploring the character of Herbert and how he reacts in different situations." Those piercing eyes gaze thoughtfully at the horizon. 'He's not done yet, I don't feel so, anyway...'

Dark Visions

The children of the night, what sweet music they make... DARK SIDE regular Richard Marshall puts his earplugs in and tunes in on things to come.

RAIMI RETURNS

Advance reports suggest that Sam (EVIL DEAD) Raimi's forthcoming DARKMAN marks a welcome return to the classic horrors of the 1940s. Reminiscent in tone to THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, the film stars Liam Neeson as Dr Peyton Westlake, inventor of a machine that utilises synthetic flesh (shades of Dr. X!) to recreate the features of burn victims. The plot takes off when Westlake's attorney girlfriend (Frances McDormand of MISSISSIPPI BURNING) mistakenly leaves some incriminating evidence from a case she's working on in his lab. A psychopathic killer (Larry Drake) comes after the documents, leaving Westlake for dead in the burning building. But he survives, horribly disfigured, to plan a campaign of revenge. 'He's a kind of throwback to the old Universal monsters,' says Raimi. 'The poor sap is cursed. His tormentors happen to be criminals, so that makes him a hero.'

The film marks a considerable step up in the budget stakes for Raimi, whose original EVIL DEAD movie was shot on 16mm with funds scrounged door-to-door. DARKMAN is in the $11 million range, has a music score by BATMAN's Danny Elfman, and includes some spectacular action scenes involving a helicopter chase above the streets of Los Angeles. The makeup for Neeson's character took latex wizard Tony Gardener three hours a day to apply and required almost all of the actor's head to be encased in a complex mask. For latter scenes in which Westlake's synthetic flesh begins to deteriorate, Gardner devised an effect of skin popping, steaming, and starting to melt. 'The EVIL DEAD pictures were rollercoaster rides with no discernible storylines,' says the 30 year-old director. 'DARKMAN is the first film I have done where I'm dealing with a story with real characters. I don't want people to say: "Wow, what a cool shot!", I want them to say: "Gosh, what's gonna happen to the poor Darkman now?"'. DARKMAN opens in the UK this winter, by which time Raimi should be into production on EVIL DEAD 3. 'It's set in the Middle Ages,' he explains with a chuckle. 'So we may call it MEDIEVIL DEAD!'

GHOULS SCHOOL

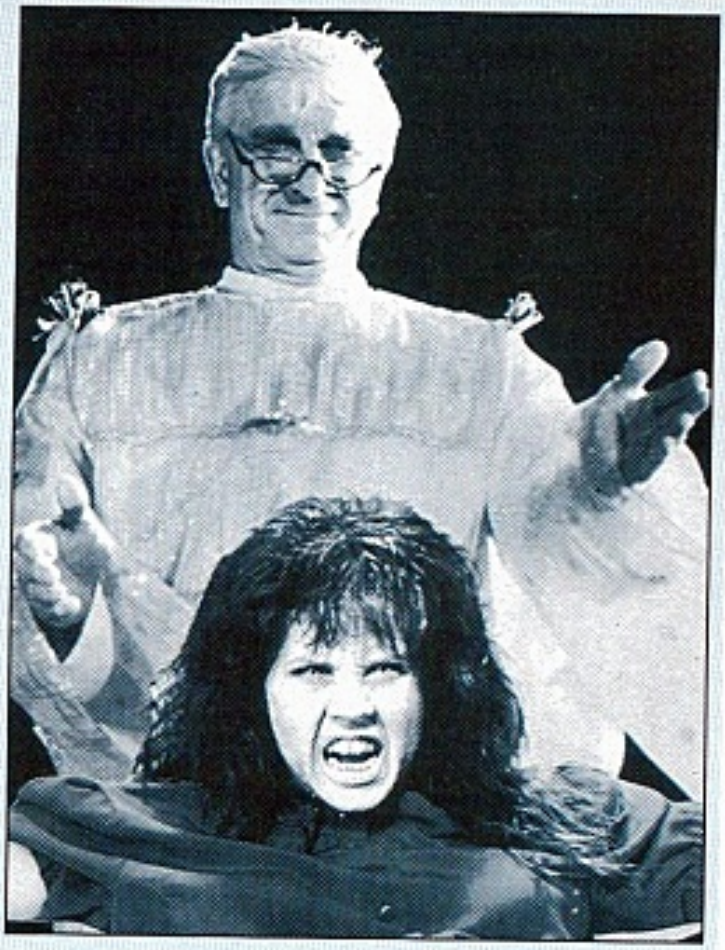
'I didn't want to make another teen slasher movie' says makeup whizz turned director John Carl Buechler, referring to his less-than-inspired work behind the camera on FRIDAY THE 13TH PART VII. So what did he go for instead, something classy and intellecutal, with a real social message to impart? Well, no, not really. He decided to make GHOULIES GO TO COLLEGE! Okay, so a guy's got to pay the rent. The GHOULIES are of course mischevious demons from hell, who have a propensity for popping up out of toilet bowls (hence the original slogan: 'They'll get you in the end!]). And though neither of the previous two GHOULIES films were very good, both managed to turn a handsome profit on video, which encouraged Vestron to ante up the lolly for a third outing. Buechler says this movie will be, 'a horror comedy romp somewhere along the lines of ANIMAL HOUSE meets THE GATE,' and promises that it will live up to its ad campaign!

MUPPETS FROM HELL?

That whizzing sound you hear is Jim Henson spinning in his grave at the latest offering from BAD TASTE director Peter Jackson. Called MEET THE FEEBLES, it's an X-rated puppet extravaganza in which the familiar characters of Miss Piggy and Kermit the Frog become Heidi the passionate Hippo and Robert the friendly Hedgehog – and what they get up to is definitely not for kids! Set backstage at the recording of a puppet variety show, the supporting cast includes a (literally) muckraking journalist bluebottle, a smooth-talking sewer rat who makes porno pics in the basement, Harry the Hare, who thinks he has AIDS, and Sid the manic-depressive elephant who is out to commit suicide because he has been slapped with a paternity suit by a chicken. Once more New Zealand filmmaker Jackson hits all the bad taste bases, constructing a wild and crazy puppet epic that rips off everything in sight, including a 'Nam flashback that becomes a set-piece parody of THE DEER HUNTER. So far no British distributor has had the courage to pick up this unique movie. Watch this space for further details....

THE DEVIL MADE THEM DO IT

Almost two decades on from the original movie, Hollywood has just been possessed by another bout of EXORCIST fever. First comes EXORCIST III – LEGION which though written and directed by William Peter Blatty (the author of the original novel), has only a tenuous connection to the previous two entries in the series. Instead its storyline concerns a gruff police Lieutenant (played by George C. Scott) who is leading the hunt for a grisly serial killer who carves the astrological sign for Gemini into his victim's hands. Things get a mite sinister when our hero discovers the Gemini Killer actually died in a hail of police bullets years ago – at precisely the same moment as Father Karras was taking his fateful plunge from Regan MacNeil's window. Originally scheduled for release earlier in the year, 20th Fox understandably got a little worried when they viewed the finished product and realised there wasn't actually an exorcism sequence in the movie! $4 million extra was then spent creating an effects-laden climax which involves startling Greg Cannom makeup for the demon Pazuzu and a rotating room a-la THE FLY. But will audiences accept an Exorcist movie without Linda Blair? The cult actress says, "I AM the Exorcist! Audiences will throw rocks at the screen..." We won't have to wait long to find out; the movie opens in the UK in November, roughly the same time as lovely Linda can be seen opposite THE NAKED GUN's Leslie Nielsen in a spoof EXORCIST flick entitled, wait for it, REPOSSESSED!



A FEAR COP!

Shades of THE HIDDEN and THE TERMINATOR can be found in Kevin (WITCHBOARD) Tenney's forthcoming PEACEMAKER, a straight-to-video chiller about two aliens who decide to use Earth as their last battleground. One is the policeman of the title (played by Lance Edwards), and the other is the near-indestructible renegade (Robert Forster) he is pursuing. The stunt-packed movie has some spectacularly gruesome makeup effects. "We've got a fractured leg with a bone sticking out", says Tenney, "a hand dangling from handcuffs, and some horrific burn makeup for when Bob Forster gets blown up in a truck explosion. The challenge of this film was trying to get it to look like it cost $20 million when it was nowhere near that..." Look for a release on the Medusa Video label shortly.

MAURICE MICKLEWHITE HAS A FRIGHT

Not a lot of people know this, but Michael Caine has this new film coming out soon where he plays a disgusted ad-man who discovers he has the power to make obnoxious people 'disappear' in a shocking and explosive manner. Caine hasn't dabbled much in the horror genre over the years (Oliver Stone's THE HAND is his only straight-ahead genre flick), but this one, which is called A SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM, is apparently a very stylish affair indeed, recalling the best of Hitchcock. Don't miss it.

TV NEWS

As STAR TREK - THE NEXT GENERATION moves into its fourth series (the original cult show only managed three), reports are coming in that the Beeb will be starting to screen it (in Nicam Digital Stereo) this November. At an average of $1.3 million an episode, it's one of the most expensive shows on television today. The popular Steven Spielberg feature film, HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS has become a new 72-episode sitcome from MCA and Amblin Entertainment, and the fleet-footed D.C. comics hero, FLASH is featured in a new series written by TRANCERS scripters Paul De Meo and Danny Bilson. The title role is taken by John Wesley Shipp, well known to American audiences for his work in daytime soaps, while MAX HEADROOM's Amanda Pays is Tina McGee, Barry Allen's girlfriend. Finally, 60's cult horror queen Barbara Steele joins INVADERS star Roy Thinnes to make a comeback in the gothic soap opera DARK SHADOWS. Ben Cross plays vampire hero Barnabas Collins. We'll probably get to see the feature-length pilot episode on video over here.

CURRENTLY FILMING

TERMINATOR II (James Cameron directs this $50 million blockbuster, with Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton and Michael Biehn all reprising their roles); CHILD'S PLAY II (demon doll Chucky's back, this time directed by John Lafia, writer of the first movie); NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET VI (directed by Rachel Talalay, producer of 3 and 4); THE TERROR WITHIN PART II (starring, written and directed by Andrew Stevens); THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM (a new version of the Poe classic, directed by Stuart Gordon and produced by Charles Band); DEATHSTALKER IV; GRAVEYARD SHIFT; BEASTMASTER II – THROUGH THE PORTAL OF TIME (Wings Hauser again!); PUPPETMASTER II; TO DIE FOR II; WAXWORK II; KILLER TOMATOES STRIKE BACK; BARBARIAN QUEEN III – REVENGE OF THE SHE-KING; DESIRE AND HELL AT SUNSET MOTEL. And finally, because you requested it: HOWLING VII Keep watching the skies...

THE ALIENS NEXT DOOR

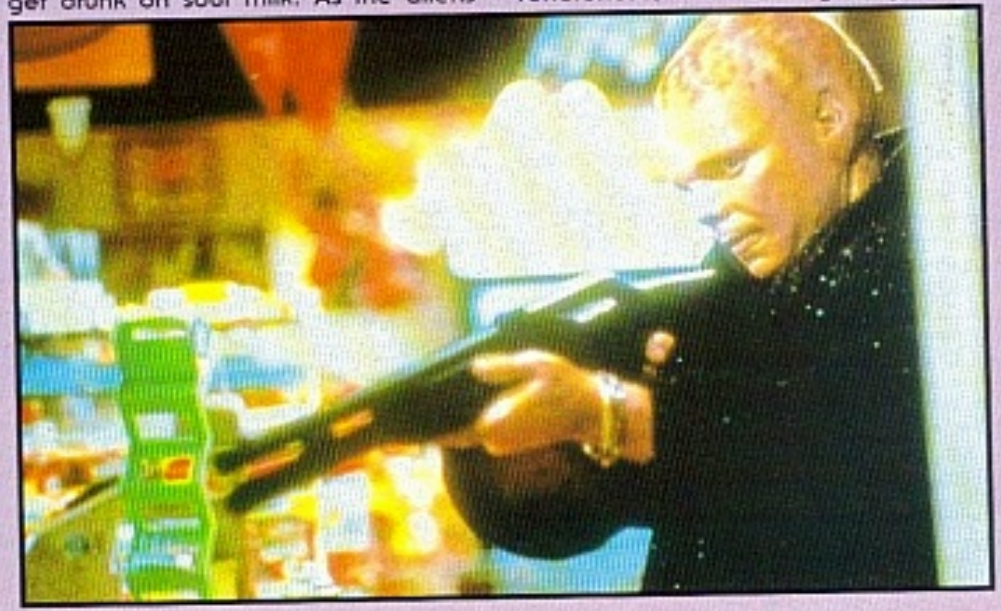
Jon Abbott examines Alien Nation's transition from big screen movie to prime time television series.

James Caan, Mandy Patinkin

One of the significant differences between a film and a TV series is that with a film you only have one shot at getting it right – after that, it's all post-mortems, praise, or recriminations. With an ongoing TV series, you can develop the show as you go along, throwing out what doesn't work, and putting in what's needed. As a feature film, Gale Ann Hurd's and Graham Baker's *Alien Nation*, written by *New Twilight Zone* contributor Rockne O'Bannon ("Word Play", "The Shadow Man", "A Matter Of Minutes") is generally regarded to have started well with a wonderful premise but then fizzled out into traditional buddy cop show heroics toward the second half. It's a view shared by lead actors Gary Graham and Eric Pierpoint, and executive producer Kenneth Johnson, who have been granted that second chance with the assignment to turn the *Alien Nation* feature film into a weekly TV series.

The premise is that it's a few years into the 1990's, and the survivors of an alien slave ship from space that has crashed in America are trying to integrate themselves into Earth's, and primarily, America's society. The aliens have no ears, two hearts, speckled egg-shaped heads, eat raw meat, and get drunk on sour milk. As the aliens were slaves until they landed on Earth, series' creator Johnson cleverly parallels the reaction to the immigrants by drawing analogies across the ages, from the black slaves of only 200 years ago to the civil rights movements of the 1960's and the fight of all minorities for rights, decency, tolerance and acceptance ever since time began.

The "newcomers", derogatorily referred to as "slags" in the casual everyday racism of society, are confronted by a variety of human reactions to their presence including fear, mistrust, revulsion, liberal guilt, and pure hatred in the form of the Klan-like "purists" who say "keep Earth for the humans". Others befriend the aliens, some – like police officer Matt Sikes (Gary Graham) find themselves having to adjust to their new work-mates' bizarre appearances, customs, and behaviour. For Sikes (James Caan's character in the film), who discovers to his dismay that his surname means "shit-head" in alien Tenetonese, this means getting along



Alien Nation – The Movie

Gary Graham Eric Pierpoint

with eager-to-please George Francisco (Eric Pierpoint taking Mandy Patinkin's film role), who is revelling in his new-found freedom and is the first newcomer to make detective.

For his family, blending in on Earth is not so easy. Wife Susan (Michelle Scarabelli) must deal with difficult neighbours, finding work, and raising two kids, cute Emily (Lauren Woodland) and pouting rebel Buck (Scan Six), who's running with a bad crowd. One thing she doesn't have to worry about is having babies; it's the alien men who get pregnant, after a sexual ritual that involves a third partner and "humming" rather than "bonking". Needless to say, there's plenty for the narrow-minded to hate, and plenty for the rest of humanity to adjust to, and the aliens' predicament (or humankind's attitude) is not helped much by the fact that the newcomers have a heightened sense of sound, sight and smell, which enables them to pick up the slightest whispered aside, nudge, or slur.

Salt water is like acid to them, and ironically, quarantine procedures on their arrival appear to have caused them to develop a disease (passed on to susan in some versions of the pilot, but then quickly forgotten).

The TV pilot wastes no time in going for the Big One – the alien's version of AIDS – and Johnson, who feels passionately about the evils of racism and intolerance – cleverly includes other discriminated-against groups, such as women and blacks, among those who are hostile towards the newcomers.

Before and after make-up: Sean Six

Eric Pierpoint

There are Nazi overtones too, for some of the alien slave-keepers, the Overseers, have – like war criminals – assimilated themselves into Earth society under their new names.

Ironically, in a twist any *Twilight Zone* fan could appreciate, it's a second chance for Johnson to explore these themes in a science-fiction setting, having fallen out with NBC and Warners during the production of the V mini-series, Johnson's previous SF allegory about Nazi Germany that was taken from his control after the first excellent four hours. On that occasion, the aliens were the hostiles; here, there are no clear-cut heroes and villains, or friendly looking faces to be ripped apart to reveal repulsive reptillian visages. The message of *Alien Nation* is that there is the capacity for good and bad in all of us, and appearances, even under masks, don't tell the whole story.

As the cop duo of Sikes and Francisco, the focal point around which we view the strage troubled world of the alien nation, Gary Graham and Eric Pierpoint come across as a Kirk and Spock for the 1990's; Pierpoint prefers to liken them to Felix and Oscar, the opposites of Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple*, a play, film, and TV series about two fighting friends of opposing character. After twelve years in film and TV, it's Graham's first major work; his TV roles include episodes of *Hunter*, *Moonlighting*, and *Remington Steele*, as well as

Michelle Scarabolli

Lauren Woodfield

Terry Treas

The Alien Nation cast play happy families

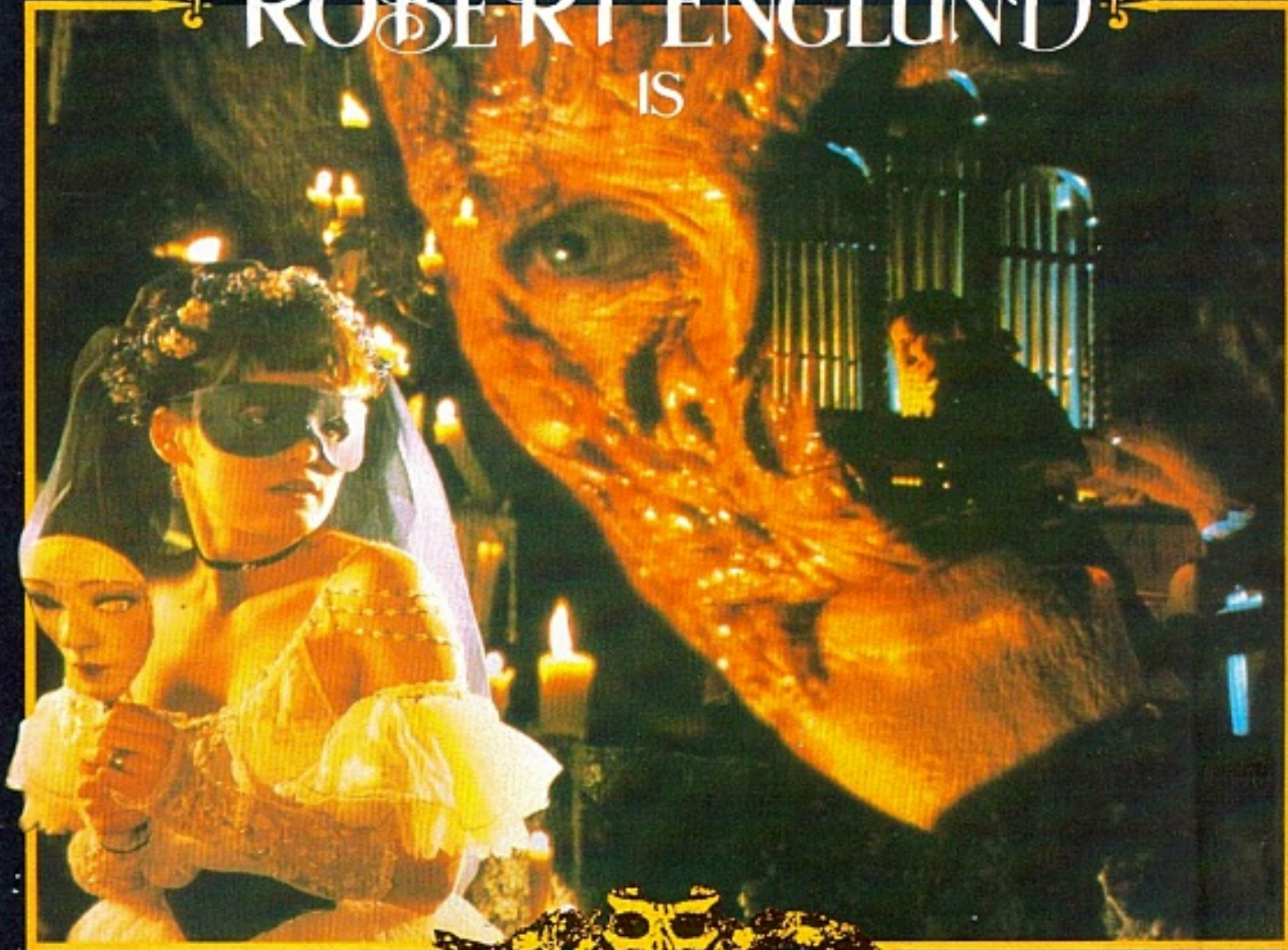
the film *Roboox*. Pierpoint appeared in the remake of *Invaders From Mars* recently, and his TV roles include guest slots in *Hill Street Blues, Fame, In The Heat Of The Night*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Michelle Scarabelli is a model turned actress who played Jo Santini in the dire syndicated continuation of *Airwolf* and then spent a year with her hair fluffed up for *Dallas*; she's guested on the TV series of *War Of The Worlds* and *Night Heat*. Terri Treas plays Cathy Frankel, an alluring newcomer who develops a cautious romantic interest in Sikes, who's not at all sure about having an inter-racial relationship. Treas has previously appeared in the B-horror pics *Deathstalker, The Terror Within* and *The Nest*, as well as chalking up TV shots in *Matlock, Murphy Brown, The Master* and *Heart Of The City*. Sean Six is a newcomer in every sense, while his young co-star Lauren Woodland has made numerous cute kid commercials and shown up in episodes of *Our House, L.A. Law*, and *St. Elsewhere*.

Followers of *V* may remember that *Nightmare On Elm Street's* Freddy Krueger, Robert Englund, first came to prominence as the cute n' loveable alien, Willy in one of that series' more embarrassing low points for which Johnson gets to take the blame. Believe it or not, he's succumbed yet again, and *Alien Nation* includes Jeff Marcus as nerdy newcomer Albert – such old-fashioned attempts at corny comic relief hardly become the rest of Johnson's slick, stylish productions. Finally, no cop show, however unique, would be complete without a hard-bitten by-the-book, status-seeking diplomat superior... Step forward, Ron Fassler, as mean Captain Grazer. Trivia buffs may be interested to know that Grazer very nearly became the bad guy in the pilot, before last minute rewrites made him a regular instead – but even though the series should be off and running on Sky One (Wednesdays at 8.00) by the time you read this, I won't blow the ending of the ingenious pilot story here... just in case. Fassler's TV credits include roles in *L.A. Law, Slap Maxwell, St. Elsewhere, Night Court, Beverly Hills Buntz* and *Max Headroom*.

Mandy Patinkin and James Caan Alien Nation – The Movie

ROBERT ENGLUND

IS



THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

18

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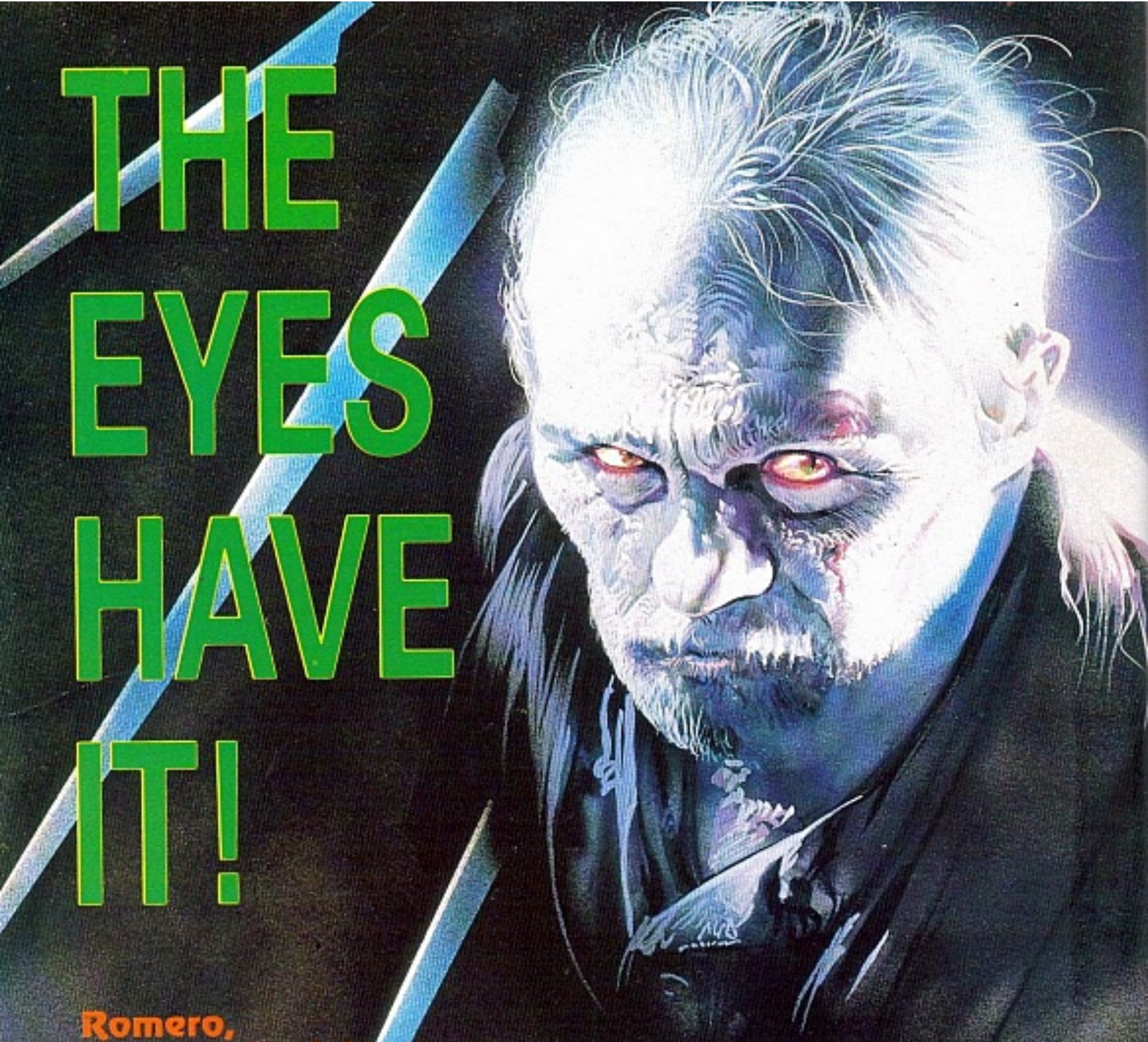


Romero, Argento Savini and Poe! Sounds too good to be true? Alan Jones looks into Two Evil Eyes...

The time: 1957
The place: The Plaza movie theatre in Pittsburgh.

A twelve year-old boy takes his seat to watch Hollywood superstar James Cagney as legendary make-up artist Lon Chaney in THE MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES. And that cinema-going experience was to change Tom Savini's life forever. He even called his son Lon! Make-up became his passion and while schoolfriends were out playhing football, he'd be in the bathroom "doing grotesque things" to his face.

It was this obsession with the magic of movie-making which helped launch the gore king's film career in the early 1970s after numerous appearances on stage and a tour of duty in Vietnam as a combat photographer. He said, "No matter how hard I try I'll never be able to duplicate the real horrific carnage I witnessed during that bloody war".

Savini cut his teeth on the low-budget horrors DEAD OF NIGHT/DEATHDREAM (1972) and DERANGED (1974), before his association with cult director George Romero began. He had auditioned for Romero when NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD (1968) was in the early planning stages but his Vietnam call-up prevented it. Savini's career has travelled full circle since then and now he's putting the finishing touches to the colour remake of the Romero classic he's just directed.

His first project with Romero was MARTIN (1976) and their special relationship developed through ZOMBIES/DAWN OF THE DEAD (1979), KNIGHTRIDERS (1981), in which he

also played Morgan the Black Knight, CREEPSHOW (1982), DAY OF THE DEAD (1985) and MONKEY SHINES (1988).

Savini's graphic effects work has also been featured in EFFECTS/THE MANIPULATOR (1979), THE BURNING (1980), MANIAC (1980), ROSEMARY'S KILLER/THE PROWLER (1981), EYES OF A STRANGER (1981), MIDNIGHT (1981), NIGHTMARE/NIGHTMARES IN A DAMAGED BRAIN (1981) – consultant only, INVASION U.S.A. (1985), THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2 (1986) and RED SCORPION (1989). But his most famous slash work appeared in the seminal bloodletter FRIDAY THE 13TH. (1980) and the fourth sequel THE FINAL CHAPTER (1984).

The time: August 1989.
The place: The Allegheny Cemetery, 4734 Butler Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

A 44 year-old man, now proclaimed the self-styled King of Splatter, takes his place in front of steadicam operator Nicola Pecorini. The film is TWO EVIL EYES/ DUE OCCHI DIABOLICI and Savini plays the part of a killer in THE BLACK CAT; a segment directed by Italian horror maestro Dario Argento. The first episode in

Bathtime – Savini style

Poe's black cat won't bring you luck

Argento's valentine to Edgar Allan Poe is THE FACTS IN THE CASE OF M. VALDEMAR, directed by George Romero – the first time the two have worked together since Argento produced DAWN OF THE DEAD. THE BLACK CAT stars Harvey Keitel as tabloid crime photographer Rod Usher pushing his craft to the limit for his new book 'Metropolitan Horrors.'

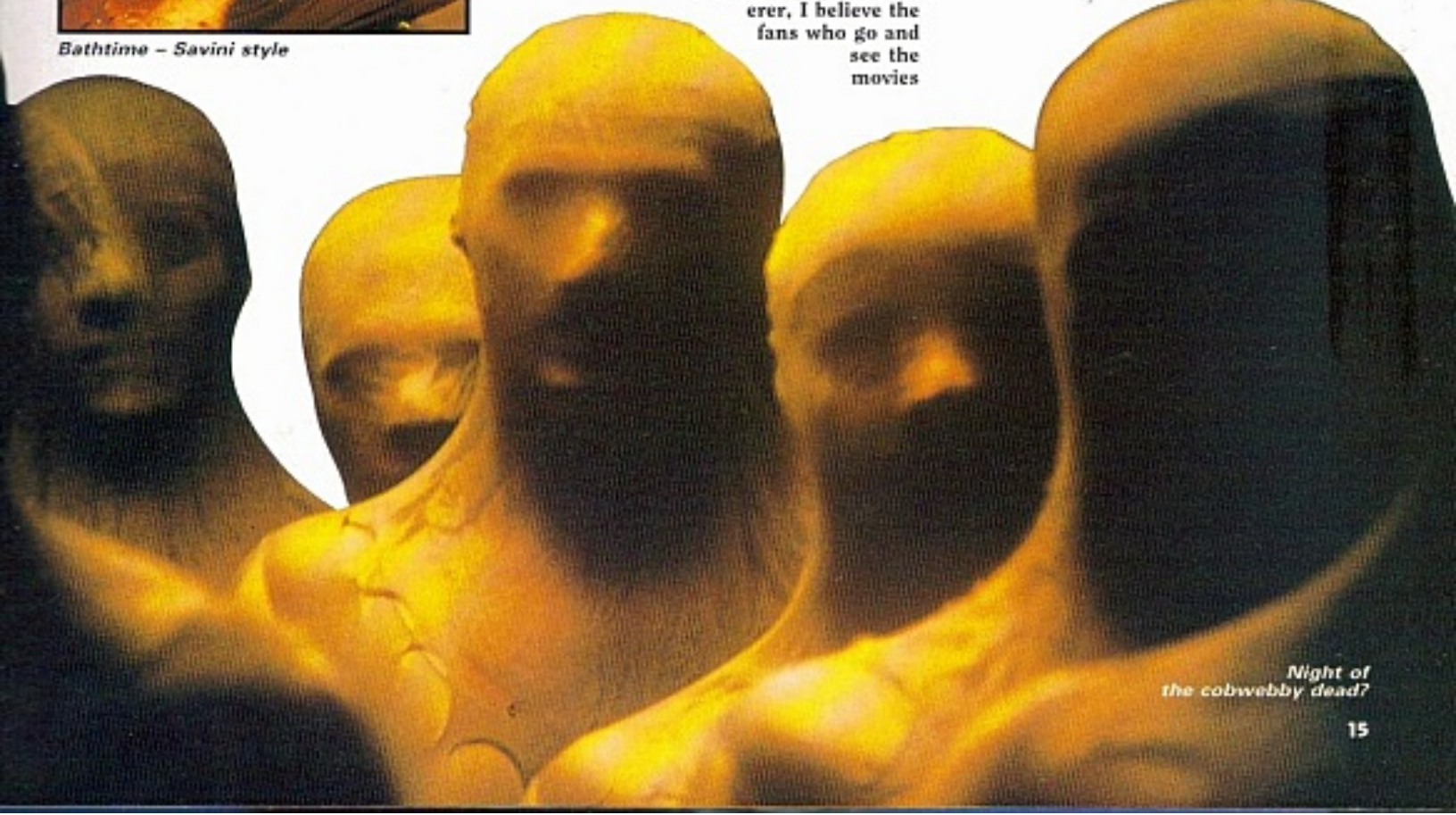
In the same cemetery location used by Romero for NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, Tom Savini looks very out of place, deliberately it transpires. He insisted on being dressed in Victorian garb for his guest role as a sadistic psycho who has dug up his cousin's cadaver to yank out all her teeth.

Sporting a stylish ponytail he says, "I always like to play a part in every film I'm doing effects for, one, to keep by Screen Actors Guild benefits going, two to satisfy my latent acting abilities. As soon as I was hired on the make-up side, I asked Dario if I could play a murderer, I believe the fans who go and see the movies containing my work view them as art exhibits they favour. Seeing me *in persona* is an added embellishment."

The demented murderer Savini plays in THE BLACK CAT has been lifted directly from the Poe story 'Berenice,' in keeping with the other diverse *homages* Argento has peppered into his original script. Savini clarifies: "This guy is a monomaniac. He sees a shadow and fixes on it. He's in love with his cousin, because when she smiled one day he fixed on her teeth. Now she's dead, he wants the objects of his adoration. Dario thinks I look a lot like Poe dressed this way. Other crew members haven't been so kind. They think I resemble Charles Manson!"

When Savini was first offered the make-up chores on TWO EVIL EYES, he considered the work-load as one movie. But he remarks, "Once George's section was over, it was as if a new adventure had begun with a whole new feel and ambience. This cemetery is a block away from my home. I even have relatives buried here, but I feel like I'm in a foreign country with

This shirt's bringing me out in a rash!

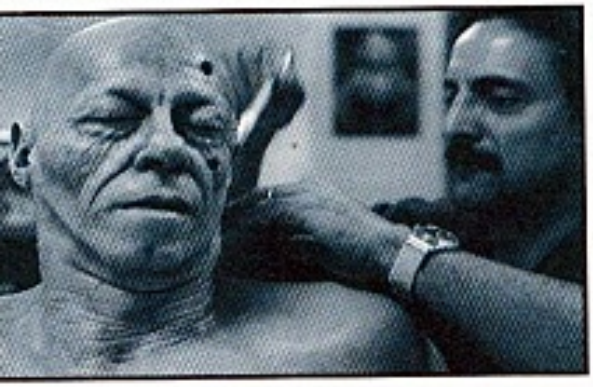


Night of the cobwebby dead?

all these Italians around. There's no miscommunication however. What Dario wants he can express with his face and arms. He acts out everything. He's even hung himself in mime!"

About working with Argento, Savini elaborates, "Dario is wild, crazy, eccentric and brilliant. He doesn't shoot a story so much as create emotions. He makes the audience feel, because he is his own demanding audience. He liaises with them, creating what he knows they want to see. His suggestions to bring out the best in my work have been tremendously effective.

Only today he had the idea to have a newspaper page blowing on and off the corpse's face – a simple touch increasing the subtle power of the effect enormously because you only glimpse flashes of mutilation. Have you noticed how everyone on the crew is walking around clutching volumes of Poe stories? Dario forced us to rediscover one of our greatest writers. It took an Italian to reveal to us what we were missing. We owe him a great deal for that".



Top: Tom Savini at work. Middle: Romero gives a zombie a screen test. Bottom: Dario Argento directs Madeleine Potter.

I told you to pay the heating bill!

Savini still gets excited creating make-up effects, or what he terms, "The only art form with a sell-by date". None of the TWO EVIL EYES effects are particularly groundbreaking but Savini is glad he worked on Romero's MONKEY SHINES before attempting the puppet cats Argento needed for close-ups. He explained, "The Ella hairwork held us in good stead for the cats' brown fur. The *piece de resistance* is an oversized mechanised cat's head with full articulation to make it blink, snarl, drop the jaw and furrow it's brows. This is used when Usher strangles the cat to photograph it's death throes. Other fibre-glass dummy cats were needed to give Dario enough room to swing one, throw against walls, and cut in half. We ordered short hair pelts from National Hair Technologies and accented the required gallows design on the underbelly by punching in white hair".

The last scene in THE BLACK CAT has mutant kittens feasting on a wax model of actress Madeleine Potter. She plays Usher's girlfriend Annabel, whose corpse he bricks up in a wall space to avoid discovery. Savini continues, "We designed these creatures as blind, undeveloped embryos. Fur can cover a multitude of defects but these had to be hairless to reveal the anaemic veins under the skin. The claws and teeth were made bigger too, and their eyes blank to suggest being raised in the dark. This was all Dario's input. For Annabel's decomposed body we cast Madeleine in clay and sculpted out a rotting chest area using anatomy books for reference".

The challenge for Savini's seven man team in romero's story was how to make Valdemar's corpse look frozen. Lovers Adrienne Barbeau and Ramy Zada plot to embezzle the dying miser's fortune by hypnotising him into making changes in his will. But when Valdemar dies they must keep him 'alive' for two weeks, the time span needed for the papers to become legal. That's the reason they stuff his body in the cellar freezer.

Savini continues. "We invented a material called ZIZE, a gelatine mixture you add to water. It has a crushed ice look when chopped up moth balls. Surgical jelly and glitter dust are added later. We had no idea how to achieve the frozen zombie look until our discovery. When Bingo O'Malley (Valdemar) disintegrates we used a vacuum head with air sucked out electronically. He got terribly claustrophobic while we made his cast. When we took the head cast off he looked dreadful! Did you know they were going to get Vincent Price to play a cameo role in VALDEMAR? It would have been really neat to have him bridge the same episode in Roger Corman's TALES OF TERROR with TWO EVIL EYES".

Savini is currently finishing off a second volume to his learn-by-example make-up effects guide book 'Grande Illusions'. But his main preoccupation recently has been directing the 21st. Century Film Corps. colour remake of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD for writer/producer George Romero.

Starring Patricia Tallman from KNIGHTRIDERS, Tony Todd and Tom Towles, Otis in HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER, the strictly financial

The Black Cat – walls have fears

reworking doesn't mention the word zombie at all. Instead the ghouls are termed D.T.'s – Dead Things. Savini's previous directorial work was seen on the TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE television show and when I spoke to him he was looking forward to the challenge of creating maximum suspense on a low budget.

He concludes, "I'm honoured George asked me to direct the revamped idea which shot him to fame. Let's hope the same happens to me! I keep reading about 'the ill-advised remake' and the blasphemy it represents to the fans. George has updated the plot and added many neat twists and turns. The original story is over within 65 minutes and the remainder takes new directions. That's the attraction for me. You're getting a colour remake plus a sequel in one package. Tell me honestly – is that such a bad deal?" ■

JUDGE DREDD

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PART 1 OUTER

Jon Abbott tunes in to TV terror in Part One of an in-depth feature on one of the greatest SF shows of the 60s

"Do not attempt to adjust the picture... there is nothing wrong with your television set... or your squarial... or your video recorder...! After ten years absence (and fifteen before that), the "Control Voice" is back... "You are about to participate in a great adventure... you are about to experience the awe and mystery which reaches from the inner mind... to *The Outer Limits*!"

As far as sciencie-fiction, fantasy and horror on TV are concerned, the commendable efforts of BBC2, Channel Four, and ITV, alongside such relatively new outlets as video and satellite TV have created an abundance of riches – ranging from screenings of first-run new series to re-runs of classic oldies. Indeed, amidst this wealth of delights, there is the pleasant risk that a major television event of some significance might well be in danger of being overlooked, marginalised, or worse still, even dismissed: the return of one of the finest sci-fi/horror shows ever produced for television...

At present there are not one, but two ways to feast your tired eyes on these television masterpieces... for *The Outer Limits* has not only recently started a re-run on BSB's Galaxy channel, but MGM/UA are also getting around to releasing the series on video in the U.K. So if you do nothing else for the next few weeks, find yourself some way to get access to these extraordinary fifty minute feature-film quality classics from the birth of the space-age.

The brainchild of the man who wrote Hitchcock's script for *Psycho* and Orson Welles' "gopher" ("I guess he thought I was in the company – and when they left Washington and went to Philadelphia, I just went with them!"), *The Outer Limits* was conceived by Joseph Stefano and Leslie Stevens, as a production of Stevens' Daystar company.

Stevens has an extraordinary history. His father was a vice admiral in the Navy, who was also an author and an artist (career choices that don't usually find themselves compatible), and paid his son a penny a word to learn Shakespeare. Raised in England, Stevens would attend plays at the Old Vic, and on returning to Washington wrote his first science-fiction play at age fifteen, "The Mechanical Rat".

Entering and winning a competition, his prize was to spend time with Orson Welles' Mercury theatre, and he ended up touring with them. He was an intelligence officer in Iceland, studied drama at Yale, played and wrote theatre in New York, and took ludicrous low-paid jobs to support himself while learning his craft, including stints as a hotel night clerk, an attendant in a psychiatric hospital, and a copy-boy for *Time* magazine – all jobs that would stand him in good stead for coping with *The Outer Limits* and the mad world of American TV!

Eventually writing a series of moderately successful productions for Broadway, Stevens started working for television in New York, scripting one-off plays for the numerous anthology dramas of the '50's. By 1958 he had moved to hollywood, where he formed his Daystar production company with a view to making feature films and TV pilots for prospective series, as the likes of *Kaft Television Theatre*, *Four Star Playhouse*, and *Playhouse 90* faded into oblivion with the '50's.

Daystar's first production, (in 1959) was a B-feature titled *Private Property*. Filmed for peanuts at a friend's house in ten days its content and production process would label it accurately as an exploitation picture.

An adaption of Stevens' stage play *Marriage-Go-Round* followed, and then *Hero's Island* both with James Mason.

Stevens may very well have been the first of a breed of which there are many in TV today – "the curious combination of corporate executive and creative artist" as *Time* magazine called him. Today, the creative artist must be a businessman as

well – the "writer-creator-producer", nicknamed "hyphenates" by the industry – to keep control over the work produced. Most of today's best television comes from writer-producers like Steven Bochco, Stephen Cannell, Kenneth Johnson, and others who, by doing both jobs, understand the needs of each.

Today, the networks are so desperate for hit series, and so keen to retain the services of those who have proven they can produce them, that this is standard practice. Back in 1963, the networks were all-powerful, and they weren't about to let any one person in pro-

LIMITS

gramme production hold too much power by carrying too many titles to his name. Consequently, while the Control Voice took over the viewers' TV sets each week without much trouble, it was somewhat harder for Stevens to hold control over the fate and fortunes of *The Outer Limits*.

"I think he wanted to be President of the United States!" one colleague jovially said of Stevens. "He was one of those guys with a black Lincoln Continental and eight pairs of sunglasses – all black! "He always wore a black suit" said another. "If it was off the wall, Leslie was for it," said another.

Daystar's first TV pilot was *Rodeo* for United Artists, which later became the series *Stoney Burke*, starring Jack Lord, Warren Oates, Bruce Dern, and Robert Dowdell (later of *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea*). Flushed with success, Stevens immediately started turning out further pilots, none of which sold. But then a meeting with an ABC executive resulted in the development of a new sci-fi show – ironically an anthology – initially to be titled *Please Stand By*. The network made one stipulation – put a monster in every show, and put it on fast".

There was one other condition – Stevens had to bring on board a "name writer" for prestige value. He wasted no time in contacting his old songwriting buddy from Greenwich Village, who had since become a successful TV and screenwriter – Joseph Stefano.

While Stevens had been enjoying success on Broadway and New York's early TV productions, Stefano had also been building himself a reputation. Intending to begin with TV work, Stefano's first submission to the 1950's anthology dramas had instead become the Carlo Ponti/Martin Ritt feature film *The Black Orchid*, with Sophia Loren. Subsequently mixing film with TV work, Stefano worked for 20th Century Fox on features, and for TV on such series as *Saints and Sinners*, *Mr. Novak*, and *The Detectives*, as well as numerous one-off dramas.

By 1959, Stefano had decided he wanted to work with a "name director" to enhance his reputation, but soon discovered the creative conflicts that Stevens had cocooned himself from by forming Daystar. Projects with Otto Preminger and William Wyler fell through, but a meeting with Hitchcock didn't – it was for the task of writing the legendary *Psycho*, an adaption of a novel by Robert Bloch which neither of them cared for in its original form, but both agreed on how to restructure it for a film.

Stefano, with his penchant for dark, gothic horror and darker characters, was well-suited to chronicle the grim life of psycho Norman Bates. "I think analysis is probably why I began writing in the first place", he said once. "As a writer, I'm fearless when it comes to material that is disturbing to me. I would credit to the analysis itself the release of inhibitions, of anything that might be repressed". CONTINUED NEXT MONTH WITH EPISODE GUIDE

VIDEO VAULT

The door to the video vault creaks open. The Dark Side tunes in to the latest in TV terror.

Key to the ratings:
**** = excellent
*** = good
** = mediocre
* = poor

ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS

CIC Video. Released 21st September.

**½

It may sound like a spoof, but Byron (WAR OF THE WORLDS) Haskin's enjoyable 1964 SF reworking of the Daniel Defoe classic is all the more enjoyable for being played dead straight. Astronaut Paul Mantee crash-lands his spacecraft on the Red Planet and has to survive the hostile landscape in company with Mona the Woolly Monkey and an alien humanoid 'Man Friday' (played by Vic Lundin). Adam (BATMAN) West also appears as an astronaut pal of mantee's, but he doesn't last too long in the scheme of things! Tense, interesting, and beautifully shot on red-tinted Death Valley locations by Winston Hoch. But how can CIC justify asking £30 for this one when it should surely be a sell-through release?

Certificate PG.
Running time 105 minutes approx.

N.T.

MONKEY SHINES: AN EXPERIMENT IN FEAR

Virgin Video. Released: 20th September.

**½

George Romero is one of the most talented filmmakers working in the horror genre, but this dragged-out tale of monkey mayhem certainly doesn't represent his best work. Based on a novel by Michael Stewart, it stars Jason Beghe as Allan Mann, a brilliant law student whose life is shattered when he is hit by a truck while out Jogging. He wakes up in hospital paralysed from the head down, and is driven to attempt suicide (not easy when you can only move your head!) before a research scientist pal (John Pankow) provides him with a lifeline in the shape of a genetically altered capuchin monkey named Ella.

At first Ella Just helps out round the house, much to the annoyance of grouchy nurse Maryanne (played by Christine Forrest, George Romero's real-life wife). But eventually the little furball becomes brighter and brighter, and starts tuning in on our hero's brainwaves, picking up on the deep-seated homicidal tendencies Allan is directing at those he thinks have wronged him. You guessed it - it quickly becomes a case of 'Monkey See, Monkey Do,' and Ella sets out to pay a few nocturnal visits to Allan's enemies... Romero has come a long way since the choppy, compelling amateurishness of RIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. His skill as a filmmaker is immediately evident from the chillingly believable way he stages Allan's grim accident under the opening credits - the sudden veering out into the road as an Alsatian Jumps at him, his brick-loaded backpack smashing to pieces on the pavement, an apt metaphor for his crushed spine. The performances are good too, particularly Pankow's dissheveled, druggy, chain-smoking mad scientist who finally falls foul of his own creation. So why has MONKEY SHINES been stuck on the shelf for two years? Well there are two major problems here. One is the film's extreme length - like Romero's KNIGHTRIDERS it could comfortably be trimmed of half an hour of plot waffle. The other is that it's stuck with a monster which is too cute to be really frightening. CUJO and LINK floundered at the same hurdle, and likewise one comes out of this movie sympathising with the poor little critter, who was after all only trying to help carry out its master's secret wishes. The film still shapes up as superior thriller - rather than horror - fare, conjuring a notable atmosphere of unease, and some real tension in the final scenes. It's Just not the masterpiece that some Romero buffs would have you believe. Tom Savini did the unremarkable effects, including a truly daft, ALIEN-inspired shock ending obviously grafted on at a late date to supply some much-needed boxoffice punch.

Certificate 18. Running time: 108 minutes.

A.D.

THE NIGHTSTALKER

Vestron Video
Released 19th September.

*½

Jut-jawed Charles Napier's main claim to the movie hall of fame is that he's the only actor whose top jaw contains more teeth than Burt Lancaster's. Thus when somebody suggests - as they do here - that he keep a low profile, we know that they've got to be kidding. Former Russ Meyer and RAMBO star Napier plays a character named J.J. Striker (honestly!), a boozed-up cop on the trail of a psycho-killer who preys on prostitutes. It seems that this 'Nightstalker' is carrying out an old Indian ritual which involves snapping people's necks like sticks of celery, and then painting the victim's body to absorb their departing lifeforce. I suppose it makes about as much sense as anything else in the

script.
Most of the time, director Max Kleven seems uncertain whether he's making a stalk and slash movie or a low-rent DIRTY HARRY clone, but the obligatory shootouts in diners and liquor stores are marginally better handled than the supernatural aspects of the plot. Striker's on the bottle all the time and so, apparently is the cameraman, because the scenes that aren't shot in irritating extreme closeup usually take place in murky darkness, and it is absolutely impossible to see what the hell's going on in the final confrontation between cop and killer. Misogynistic in the extreme and peopled with the worst sort of caricatures, it comes as no surprise to find this was produced by Don Edmonds (of ILSA, SHE WOLF OF THE S.S. notoriety). For Charles Napier completists only.
Certificate 18. Running time: 90 minutes approx.
R.M.

PHANTOMS

Entertainment In Video.
Released 12th September.
**

An erotic thriller from the prolific Charles Band, PHANTOMS looks like it was shot amid the same gargoyle-infested landscape that provided the background for Michael Reeves' 1964 CASTLE OF THE LIVING DEAD. But the chances are viewers will be more interested in the foreground contours of Sherilyn Fenn, the hotcha star of TWO MOON JUNCTION and David Lynch's TWIN PEAKS - and from the evidence here, I would say it was quite possible the latter show could have been named after her!

Sherilyn used to be a centrefold, and old habits obviously die hard. She certainly doesn't keep her togs on for long in this soft-focus re-run of BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. As the beautiful young heiress Catherine Bomarzini, she returns to her family castle in the Italian countryside and falls into the clutches of the mysterious magician Laurence Fauvray (Malcolm Jamieson), a chap who can be a bit of a wolf at times especially when the full moon pops out. Then a beautiful ghost appears, and Sherilyn learns that the castle suffers under an ancient curse. If she wants to lift the curse then she has to get together with wolfy and do something we really ought not to discuss in a family magazine...
Substituting shapely pulchritude for gore, this slow-moving yarn does succeed in summoning up a cosy fairytale atmosphere, largely thanks to the fine sets and Mac Ahlberg's impressive camerawork. Greg Cannom's creature makeup is also a major plus, though the transformation scenes are hardly state of the art, being accomplished by in-camera dissolves. The film does drag on a bit,especially as the entire script can't have been more than a few pages long in the first place. But women may respond to the romantic elements, and male viewers will surely find a couple of points in its favour as well.
Certificate 18.
Running Time: 90 minutes Approx.
AD

SUNDOWN– THE VAMPIRE IN RETREAT

Vestron Video.
Released 17th September.
**

There haven't been many vampire westerns over the years, (only CURSE OF THE UNDEAD, NEAR DARK, and a couple of John Carradine cheapies spring immediately to mind) and this anaemic hearse opera shows some of the reasons why. It opens well enough, with a coke-snorting yuppie getting his block knocked off at a remote petrol station by what looks like one of the members of Z.Z. Top. But from then on its downhill all the way into a tepid tale built around the modestly original central concept that a colony of vampires might want to renounce their bad old ways and hole up in a desert town armed with 1000 SPF sunblock, extra-strong Ray-bans, huge sun-hats and many gallons of synthesised blood. Led by the righteous Count Mardulak (David Carradine in another phone-in performance), these mildmannered bloodsuckers just want to live in peace. But a group of rebel vampires intend to return to the old ways, and are prepared to fight for the right to bite. The scene is thus set for a wild west shootout with wooden bullets, with the witless Van Helsing (a nice cameo by EVIL DEAD star Bruce Campbell) and the film's stolid human hero (Jim Metzler) caught up in the crossfire.

Excellent photography and a rousing Elmer Bernsteinesque score by Richard Stone give the film a quality look that belies its fairly low budget. It's also nice to see old pros like M. Emmett Walsh and John Ireland in the cast. But in the end the project is done in by the sort of script that should never have been exposed to daylight.
Certificate 15. Running Time: 99 minutes.
R.M.

HOWLING V - THE RE-DIRTH

First Choice.
Released 5th September.
*½

It's a depressing thought that even though all the followups to the original HOWLING have been unmitigated disasters, the series continues ever onward. This latest instalment borrows its 'guess the werewolf' plotline from the 1974 Amicus flick, THE BEAST MUST DIE, and has a group of 'B' movie stereotypes (photographer, writer, model, actress, tennis player etc) gathering at a remote Hungarian castle and being picked off one at a time by the hairy horror in their midst. The blizzard-bound castle

setting is quite atmospheric, and so is the OMEN-type score, extremely effective in hifi stereo. But you know you've got credibility problems in a film where former Miss World Mary Stavin gives the best performance. The stilted dialogue rings on the ear like scraped claws on a blackboard ('The Devil was a werewolf. Wow!') and the muppety special effects would be a bit of a giggle too, if they were dwelt upon. As it is the movie is very low on gore - note the certificate - and the scariest thing about it is that somebody bothered to make it in the first place.

Certificate 15. Running Time: 90 minutes.
N.T.

DASKET CASE 2

Medusa Video.
Released September 5th.
***

If you thought the terror had ended when the hideously deformed Belial and his Siamese twin brother took a nosedive from the top-storey window of their seedy New York motel - you were wrong. Eight years on from the original BASKET CASE, writer/director Frank Henenlotter brings us this considerably more ambitious sequel, which begins with Duane (Kevin Van Hentenryck) hobbling out of hospital with Belial tucked in a laundry hamper under his arm.

Having somehow survived being castrated, having his throat cut, and falling four storeys to the street, our hero checks into a house of freaks run by the eccentric Granny Ruth (Annie Ross). There, he and his deformed, psychotic,psychic, homicidal brother find companionship and understanding among others of Belial's grisly kind. But their happy hideaway is threatened by the arrival of a snooping reporter looking for a sicko scoop, which makes Belial and his petrifying pals angry enough to start raiding the cutlery drawer!

It's Henenlotter's version of Tod Browning's FREAKS, and the bigger budget has allowed special effects artist Gabe Bartalos to create a houseful of memorable mutations. The film is too way out to be taken remotely seriously, and its pace is so frenetic that it begins to run out of steam about two thirds of the way through. But for the most part Henenlotter has done a remarkable job of blending humour, horror, and pathos into a truly unique viewing experience that's an absolute must for genre afficionados. Roll on BASKET CASE 3!

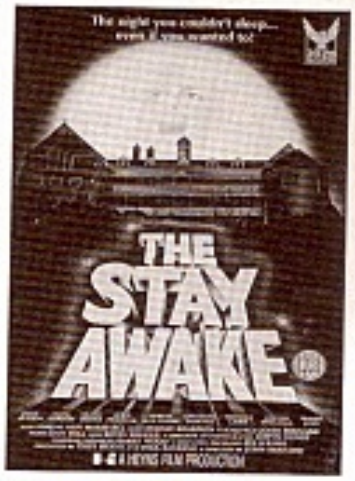
Certificate 18. Running Time: 84 minutes.
N.T.

HUMAN ERROR

Video Programme Distributors.
Released September 28th
**

The Forleys are the perfect middle-class family. Dad (Vincent Cobb) is a scientist, mom a happy housewife, and their teenage son and daughter would both be at home with 'The Brady Bunch.' They are so perfect in fact that the government organisation for which Farley works nominates them to test out 'The Dome,' a hermetically sealed house located deep beneath the Nevada desert. Supposedly a prototype for lunar living, it actually has a more sinister purpose, which becomes evident when the military drops a nuclear bomb nearby. Yes, this is actually an experiment to test out a new anti-radiation serum, and Farley and his now glow-in-the-dark family are transported to a military hospital to act as guinea pigs. But the plan backfires, and Farley - who has been transformed from mildmannered boffin to Rambo's brother- in-law escapes to gain vengeance in classic 'B' movie style. All the fun is in the final reel of this draggy science-fiction thriller.

Certificate PC. Running Time: 103 minutes.
R.M.



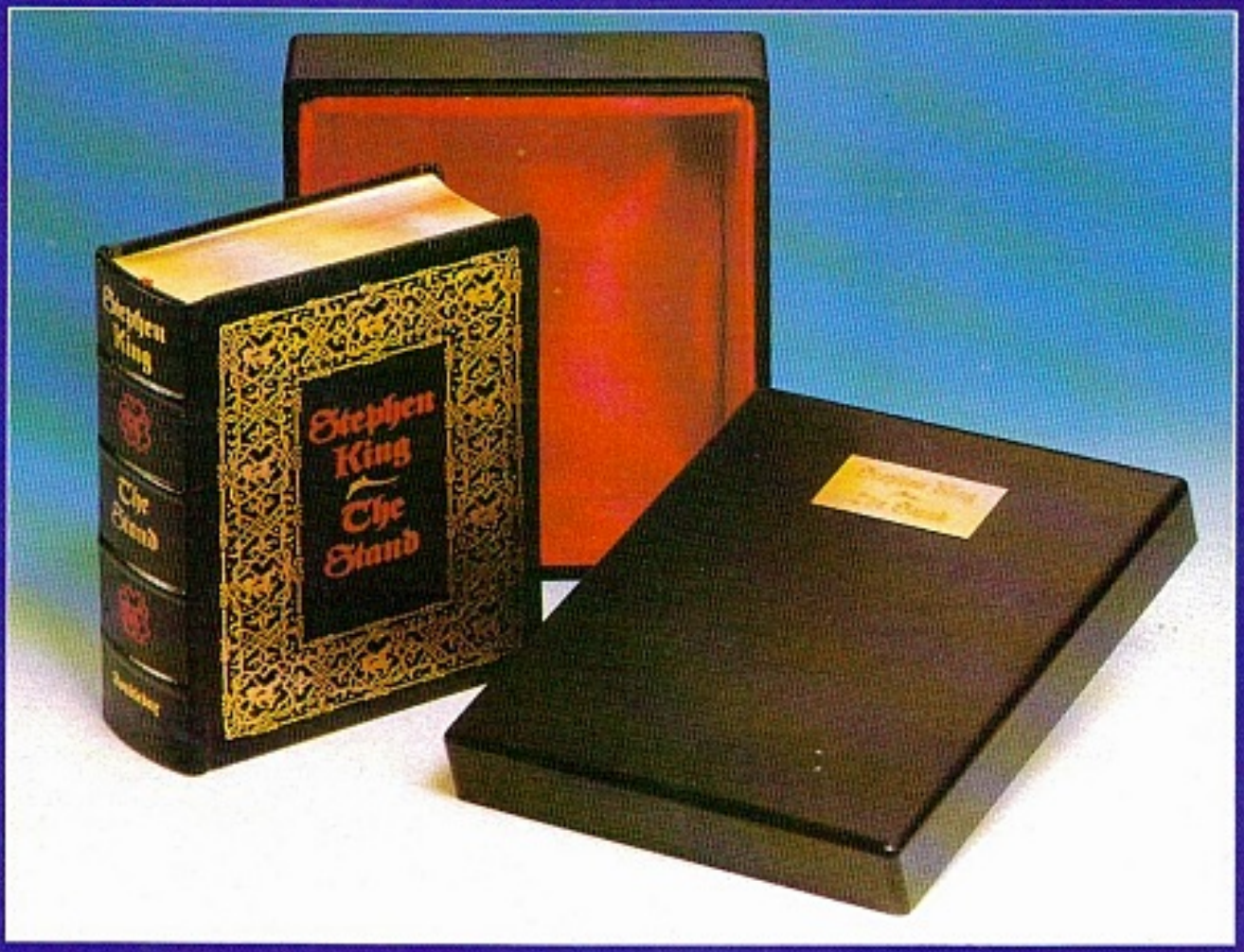
THE STAY AWAKE

20-20 Vision.
Release Date September 20th.
*

America 1969, and a ponytailed psycho is led to the gas chamber, chuckling 'You can't kill me, I'm the Angel of Darkness' as he expires. Flash forward 20 years and we're in a girls' school in Europe, with teacher Trish Walton (JayneHurron) leading a group of eight students in a 'Stay Awake' night designed to raise money for school funds.' Little does she known that that heavy breathing in the shrubbery is the reincarnation of the mad rapist, out to spy on the gals as they take interminable showers and witter on about their love lives. 'We aren't all Jamie Lee Curtis' says one - 'We're real people.' That's the best joke in the film. Shot in South Africa by people who SHOULD have been shot in South Africa, this dire effort is full of aggravating p.o.v. camera shots and cheesy effects (the killer has turned into a demon with glow-in-the-dark eyes), and most of the time it's so dark that you can't see what's going on anyway. If ever a picture was inappropriately named...

Certificate 18. Running Time: 85 minutes.
N.T.

This month's reviewers are Norman Taylor, Allan Bryce and Richard Marshall



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YES, VIRGINIA, THERE IS A HIGHLANDER 2!

When they said 'There Can Only Be One,' they were lying! The one and only Alan Jones talks to Virginia Madsen on the set of HIGHLANDER 2.

Virginia Madsen and Christopher Lambert – a Highlander fling

If you paid attention you saw her briefly in ELECTRIC DREAMS, CREATOR and DUNE. However, you probably noticed her more in HOT TO TROT, MR. NORTH and SLAMDANCE. She's actress Virginia Madsen, a 'Star of the nineties' by Hollywood press reckoning, and two movies announce her frontline arrival in no uncertain terms.

Her first high-profile release comes with Dennis Hopper's HOTSPOT where she plays a glamorous femme fatale, "A real bitch sexually destroying everyone's lives". But the petite blonde's major stab at the fantasy female stakes will be with HIGHLANDER 2: THE QUICKENING, receiving its World Premiere in Paris on February 5th, and released later in the Spring in Britain.

In the $22 million sequel to HIGHLANDER, the European box-office blockbuster turned cult film, Madsen plays Louise Marcus, an environmental activist attempting to shatter a global laser shield protecting the Earth from the ripped open ozone-layer. Built in 1999 by Christopher Lambert's Connor Macleod, the shield has been taken over by the sinister TSC corporation and is the key conservation issue in 2024.

The shield is now under constant attack by 'Cobalt' terrorists, who believe the atmosphere has repaired itself, and

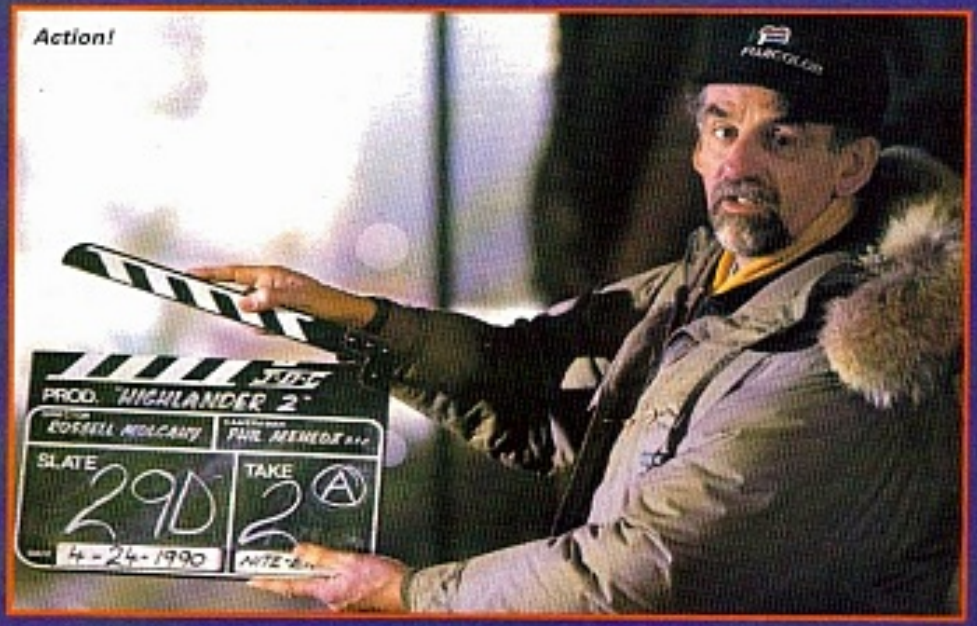
Those magnificent men in their flying machines.

rebel leader Louise teams up with Macleod to prove the theory correct. This is the revolutionary subtropical world where Macleod is now a mortal. But not for long. Because the truth about his soon-to-be regained immortality is revealed in this epic Cinemascope continuation.

He's actually a Planet Zeist alien banished into earthbound solitary confinement for threatening evil General Katana's dictatorship. Surviving assassintion attempts, absorbing the star warlord's emissaries lifeforce – The Quickening, Macleod finally learns the importance of The Gathering and The Prize and the new destiny he must now fulfil to save mankind from destruction.

Along for the spectacular all-action ride, Virginia Madsen hitches up with heart-throb Lambert, TOTAL RECALL villain Michael Ironside (as katana) and Sean Connery's wise-cracking Ramirez. Under the watchful eye of returning director Russell Mulcahy (following in only Steven Spielberg and Francis Coppola's footsteps by making a sequel to his own original), Madsen talked about her role.

"Louise's issues are my issues and this is very important to me. Ted Liss, my drama teacher, used to tell me, 'Don't put on a mask when you act. Don't wear the character like a dress. Be yourself under the given circumstances'. Louise is perfect for that. She's a very strong woman with a positive self-image. She knows exactly what she wants and will fight physically and emotionally for what she believes in. I can identify with those qualities and if I was living under her circumstances, I too would be very active in trying to change the world. I wish I was more active today, as my father was a dedicated conservationist".



Madsen wanted to be in HIGHLANDER 2 for all those right-on ecological reasons. She remarked, "It's current and there are so many deliberate parallels to what's happening today, especially with concern over the ozone-layer". She had wanted to be in the original HIGHLANDER too, she explained, "I auditioned for the part of Heather, (played by Beatie Edney), but I never got past the casting director. Russell was so mad when I told him. I'm far happier being in the sequel though. It's more of a risk. You don't know going in if all the elements will come together.

She continued, "When you decide to make this sort of fantasy adventure, you're rolling the dice. You never know what you're going to be up against. You don't know who the director is, who's doing the special effects, what's Christopher going to be like, and will Sean be in it? And if he is, how are you going to cope acting against such a superstar? All these factors may sound obvious or trite, but they are important in ascertaining if the end result will turn out to be the film you hope it will be. When I was offered the role, I wanted to find out as much about the people working on it as I could. And boy, have I've heard some very interesting gossip...!".

Don't get too excited. Most of the gossip centred around the never-ending difficulties of filming HIGHLANDER 2 on location in Buenos Aries. From the Argentine 'Manana' mentality and inevitable arguments about The Falklands and Evita, to the desperate search for a decent meal, the telephones never working and the alarming fluctuations in the Austrole/Dollar exchange rates – wiping $2 million off the budget in seconds one black day –

Virginia Madsen.

the principal photography of HIGHLANDER 2 was no picnic.

'The Paris of South America' was home to the cast and crew for varying periods ranging between twelve and thirty weeks. Because the movie is the biggest ever to hit town, everything the production did was news in the press or on television.

Madsen was surprised when she took a stroll one day down Corrientes Avenue in the city centre. This area has the highest concentration of cinemas in the entire world and SLAMDANCE was being advertised with the pre-emptive catch-line 'Featuring the star of HIGHLANDER 2'. From that moment on Madsen deliberately stayed on set, mainly the Moron aeroplane hangar housing the impressive Roger Hall giant constructions, an hour's drive from Buenos Aries.

Sitting in her luxury trailer, Madsen told me, "I liked Russell the moment I met him. I knew from the audition we'd work well together because he was careful over the choices he made. They were my choices too and being on the same wavelength is extraordinarily rare. On my first day in Argentina he asked me to do an extra take. I'd done five already, it was the end of a long day, and I was jet lagged from the plane trip. But he knew when to push me a little further to get my best performance.He was watching out for me, trusting me, caring about the character as well as the action. That's what's going to make HIGHLANDER 2 special because it isn't just about high energy spectacle. Before he became the inventor of MTV imagery, Russell used to be an actor and that has helped me enormously".

A major talking point on the HIGHLANDER 2 shoot was the electric chemistry sparking between Madsen and Lambert in early rushes. But before anyone can jump to conclusions Madsen is quick to point out, "I'm Mrs. Danny Huston, (her FAR NORTH director), and he's Mr. Diane Lane (STREETS OF FIRE, VITAL SIGNS star)!"

She remembered, "I'd met Christopher a couple of times before and when we auditioned together it was like I was already doing the film. We read the scene and worked on every nuance as if we were rehearsing. It was neat because Russell held auditions in a little theatre. We weren't sitting around some table in a dingy office. We really worked at it and I felt completely at home.

That quality has transferred itself to the film. Christopher has been very protective towards me. He loves to have fun and I've heard people asking him so many times why he's doing this kind of movie. He replies saying 'I'm dreaming. Let everyone else scramble for their Oscars, I just want to do what I never could in real life. I'm not an intense actor nor will I ever be, so I'll keep indulging my fantasies'. I love him for those wonderful childlike values. Working with him has been like going out to play".

Michael Ironside as the sinister Katana.

Sean Connery affectionately dubbed Madsen Virginia Woolf during his $3½ million two week stint on the picture. But while no-one was afraid of her, she was daunted by the strenuous physicality the role demanded. She said, "By accepting this movie I had to accept responsibility for the audience believing in me 100%, otherwise it would look ridiculously fake. Whether running away from an explosion that isn't really there, or screaming at nothingness, HIGHLANDER 2 is my determined effort to break out of the serious actress mould.

"It has been such a change to be dirtied down and constantly exhausted. But contrast is what acting is all about. It hasn't been easy holding my own against the action, but I am staying in great shape as a result. The other day I ran up and down some steep stairs endlessly while Russell pushed for a fifteenth take! But I've never been scared of opening up another door within myself to find what's there, and the more stunts I did the more I got involved in the growing fantasy".

Creativity is her character's strongest asset, explained Madsen: "Louise isn't just the 'girl' thrown into the story. She may be silly, romantic, and feminine crack commando and vital part of the narrative flow. She believes in saving the Earth. It's her cause and unlike most of us she's prepared to do something about it. She's both idealistic and realistic in a three-dimensional way you rarely find in roles for young actresses today.

I think I've given her a human face. you don't have to be vulnerable or strong yourself in real life to put those qualities across. As long as there's no danger of me becoming the new Kate Capshaw, I would love to tackle a similar role in the fantasy vein!"

A confirmed science-fiction fan, Madsen only had a small part in David Lynch's DUNE to indulge her fantasies prior to HIGHLANDER 2. She remarked, "I love fantasy so I don't necessarily have to justify the immortality aspect in the story. Other actresses might have found that a hurdle but I didn't question it. Sometimes even the greatest fairytales make no sense, yet it doesn't alter their emotional power. Most of the time these sort of movies aren't very good so I waited for the right one to come along.

I was curious to learn how special effects were done and how I would play against them because only in the best do you not notice how fake everything is. There's no doubt in my mind I've made the right choice with HIGHLANDER 2: THE QUICKENING. Working with Russell, Christopher and Sean has been morale-boosting enough, but the eye-opening technical side has been a kind of magic too".

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CLIVE BARKER INTERVIEW

Clive Barker is the renaissance man of English horror. From just reading his books or watching his movies, you could easily get the impression that he was a pretty sick and twisted sort of guy. But in person Britain's top horror auteur is as bright, cheerful, easy-going and resolutely 'normal' as can be. 'What can I tell you?' he says apologetically. My entire family WASN'T killed by an axe murderer when I was just three years old, which must be something of a disappointment to some journalists from the popular press...'

The slim, youthful-looking Liverpudlian's writing career has been of interest to nosy journos ever since he first achieved notoriety six years ago with the first of his BOOKS OF BLOOD, a series of horrendously grisly tomes that quickly became undergound cult favourites. In more recent times he has broadened his weird horizons to top the bestseller lists with chunky dark fantasies like WEAVEWORLD – a novel about the characters that live within the weave of a carpet – and THE GREAT AND SECRET SHOW. He has also left his bloody fingerprints on the movie screen too, directing HELLRAISER and NIGHTBREED, visceral adaptations of his stories, THE HELLBOUND HEART and CABAL.

Unlike his opposite number Stephen King, (whose debut on MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE proved that good horror authors don't always make good horror film directors), Barker seems to be an expert in many fields. HELLRAISER was an astonishing success, and NIGHTBREED at first promised to be even better: 'HELLRAISER didn't really have much visual sweep' said Clive a year and a half ago. 'We had a house in Cricklewood and limited sets. For NIGHTBREED we have three soundstages at Pinewood, Canadian locations, 60 monsters, and David Cronenberg in a major role. It's a big canvas that offers the possibility of making a horror movie with the visual richness of a Heironymous Bosch painting.' That was before he had made the movie. Now, after much delay, problems caused by an ever-inflating budget, and a disastrous Stateside release that led VARIETY to dub the $12 million picture, the 'HEAVEN'S GATE of horror' the film is due to open in England this month. You'll find an in-depth review in our CINEMACABRE section. In the meantime we asked Clive himself to fill us in on what went wrong.

CLIVE BARKER: I've had a very interesting period, because I recently went on a Channel 4 programme called THE ASTROLOGY SHOW, where you get your birth sign read and all that stuff. The woman said to me: "Last year was the worst year of your life." I said 'You're not wrong!' Then she went on to say, "but there's good news. It won't happen again for another seven hundred years." I liked that.

NIGHTBREED was an incredible challenge from the very beginning. Chris Figg, the producer of the HELLRAISER movies was sacked from the project six weeks in, and then my executive producer Joe Roth became head of 20th Century Fox. The political ramifications of that were byzantine. I'd lost the person who bought the

project, and Joe Roth was in a very difficult position because NIGHTBREED was now just one small movie on a whole list of pictures that Fox was going to release, so he almost became wilfully distanced from the picture. I don't blame him, because the politics of being too closely involved would not have looked good for him now he had moved into a bigger arena. But that left me, and the movie, very vulnerable.

Next they put out what was probably the worst ad campaign known to man. David Cronenberg actually wrote to Fox saying: "How dare you do this to our movie?" Of course in the end it didn't do anywhere as near as well as we expected. It ended up with about ten million dollars, which was pretty much of a disaster. That said, it has had a wonderful response from reviewers here in England. It also won 'Best Film' at an Amsterdam Film festival, and now that we have all the colour books out and all the fun stuff associated with it, it may just do a lot better over here.

But all you can do is make the movie your way. It was what you could call a

Pinhead from Hellraiser

growth period for me – to learn what it was like to encounter Hollywood politics and how vulnerable you are as a person when caught up in that system. After it was over I said to David, 'They completely f****ed our picture!' 'So what?,' he said. 'They've done it to five of mine. It's going to happen to you again, so get used to it.' You lose your virginity in these circumstances, and hopefully you learn by that process and make a mental note not to be so dumb again.

DARK SIDE: Let's go back to the first HELLRAISER movie. Were you surprised it was so successful?

CLIVE BARKER: Phew! Let me think. A lot of blood has flowed under the bridge since then... Yes, I was surprised. I certainly didn't realise that the movie was going to end up having a sequel and now having a second sequel, and being a comic book, and being a jigsaw, and being a plastic model, and all the other things. It's bizarre how a thing gathers its own

Nightbreed

momentum. At the start it was just a one and a half million dollar horror movie that was hopefully a little different from the competition, but I never would have guessed it would spawn a merchandising empire of such scale.'

The reviews for HELLRAISER were not very good when it came out. They were extremely mixed – which is a kind way of putting it – and there were a lot of reviewers who went for it with a hammer. One of the reasons for this was because it did fly in the face of the conventions of the genre. Reviewers don't like horror movies anyway – the base line is you're never gonna persuade an Alexander Walker or whoever to really like horror movies. But he'll like it if it fits reasonably neatly into his very limited description of the genre. If it doesn't then he's after it with a big gun. That was true certainly of the middlebrow papers. THE MAIL and THE EXPRESS came after HELLRAISER as if it had just pissed on their lawn, whereas the TIME OUT'S and CITY LIMITS were so much more sympathetic, because I think they're more sympathetic to popular pieces anyway.

DARK SIDE: I actually found the film somewhat similar in tone to the Pete Walker movies of the 70s, with hammer murders and a strong sexual undercurrent...

CLIVE BARKER: I take that as a compliment. I was a fan of some of those pictures, particularly FRIGHTMARE and THE HOUSE OF WHIPCORD. But whereas the Walker pictures pretty much stayed within the confines of a certain kind of afficianado - they were never very big in America for instance – we seem to have surmounted those boundaries with the HELLRAISER series, reaching an audience that maybe British horror movies haven't had since the heyday of Hammer.

DARK SIDE: Why don't British horror movies appeal to American audiences?

CLIVE BARKER: The problem remains in essence with the American view of English pictures as a whole, which is that English pictures are not at the cutting edge of anything. I'm putting aside art house pictures now. I'm putting aside MAURICE and ROOM WITH A VIEW, and all that boring stuff. The whole idea of doing a movie in the horror genre and making it work in america is such a long shot, because there's no little sensitivity among the American audience for anything which has subtext or diverges too much from what they expect. We got lucky with HELLRAISER. People couldn't even rip it off. It was a tough movie to emulate – as the second picture proved.

DARK SIDE: How do you feel about HELLBOUND – HELLRAISER 2?

CLIVE BARKER: I'm not a great fan! It was written by Pete Atkins, who is an old school friend, and directed by Tony Randel, who helped out a lot as assistant director on the first film. I have to say that the second picture has made more money than the first – which (he chuckles) pisses me off a little! No, it doesn't at all, of course. a lot of people think it's a better picture. The fact is that you have to at some point say: 'Okay, the movie was made. It wasn't the movie I would have

Nightbreed

made, but then why buy a dog and bark yourself? I was writing a book, Tony wanted to direct the movie, Pete wanted to write the movie. I got an executive producer credit on it, which is fine, but I had no real power there. You have to let these things go, in a way. You can't police everying – there just isn't time in life to watch over everything obsessively.

At the beginning I really didn't want to hand the project over. But there's a window of opportunity for a sequel, and if you miss it you will lose both the momentum and the money. I had just signed a four-book deal with Collins, my publishers, and was in the middle of writing THE GREAT AND SECRET SHOW. It was 700 pages long and I was around page 350, so there was a lot left to write There was no way I could get involved in a movie at that time. And I'm not even sure that, having written the original book and the screenplay and directed the movie of HELLRAISER, I would have been ideally placed to generate the kind of freshness of invention in the movie anyway.

DARK SIDE: The film was greatly criticised for its shoddy special effects, particularly in its vision of hell as a series of dusty old corridors like out of a low budget Lucio Fulci zombie movie...

CLIVE BARKER: I wouldn't mind if our hell had looked half as good as Lucio Fulci's! The problem was to a great extent the difficulty of budget. You could have done much grander things with more than a couple of matte paintings. I must also say that Tony's real passion is not horror, but science-fiction, and his favourite movie of all time is FORBIDDEN PLANET. So when he came to envisage Hell it was the Krell machine he was thinking about more than anything else. There are still one or two extraordinary moments in the movie. I particularly love Julia in the white suit with the blood seeping through. There are still lovely moments of surrealism that seem to work.

Nightbreed

DARK SIDE: Any news on the third HELLRAISER movie?

CLIVE BARKER: Well, it's the same team of Atkins and Randel, and they want it before the cameras in the middle of Autumn. I think that's over-optimistic, but we'll see. What I have done in essence is contributed the characters from the first movie. I just haven't got the time to get involved. Meanwhile I've got six other movie projects cooking, but books still predominate.

DARK SIDE: Presumably it's more profitable for you to write books than to direct movies...

CLIVE BARKER: In terms of filthy lucre it's MUCH better for me just to write books. My books are published in 16 or 17 languages. Books are big for me (laughs)! Movies don't hurt of course, and they are things I enjoy doing, but the root and matter of the fact happens at a desk, where nobody can intervene. There is no producer. There is nobody saying: 'Sorry, we can't afford to do that.' Nobody can touch you. I like the communality of making movies, but nothing would ever seduce me away from a desk in perpetuity, however good the bucks were.

DARK SIDE: What sort of work schedule do you have?

CLIVE BARKER: I stick to a religious work regime. I'm at my desk at eight, or eight-thirty in the morning, and I will do two-and-a-half or three thousand words a day, and I'll continue to work until I've done that. In fact I haven't done my work for today and I have another four or five pages to write after we've finished here. I'm pretty obsessive about it, and that's seven days a week until such time as I've done. I deliver the book I'm working on now on January 31st. When you're in the middle of a book – as I am at the moment – it has it's own momentum, and you don't want to break that momentum. It becomes a sort of sacred activity. I love to write. It's a great pleasure to me, the thing that makes getting up in the morning an interesting activity.

The excitement to me of writing a story is that it has a certain inevitability after a time. You have to tell it. It's an intimate process. Then something very miraculous happens. The book gets published, sent out into the world, and you can't predict what people are going to think about it. When it goes from your desk you don't know what you've really done, and then the flow comes back in the other direction, which is when it starts to get really interesting. That's when the fundamentalists write to you and tell you you're gonna burn in hell, or when somebody writes and says you changed their life. I've been getting a lot of mail from Russia recently, and it's wonderful to think that something you've written has touched people in Vladivostock and Moscow.

DARK SIDE: Tell us a little more about this new book you're working on.

CLIVE BARKER: It's called IMAJICA, and it's like WEAVEOWRLD and THE GREAT AND SECRET SHOW. It's a 700 page book set in Milan, London, Amsterdam and four other worlds (chuckles) – SOME other worlds, because there may be more than four by the time I'm finished! Increasingly in my written fiction I've been moving away from horror towards a kind of dark fantasy, and that has been, interesting...

DARK SIDE: Is this Clive Barker imitating Tolkien?

CLIVE BARKER: Definitely not! People sometimes bring up Tolkien as a frame of reference, but there's far too much fairytale sweetness about his imagery. There was never any sex in Tolkien, but

The horrors of Hellbound

Hellraiser's cenobites

there's a lot of sex in THE GREAT AND SECRET SHOW, and more in IMAJICA. I'm doing something slightly different. The scale may be Tolkienesque, but the actual imaginings themselves are quirkier than that. I've got a New York Times review which compares THE GREAT AND SECRET SHOW to the work of Thomas Pynchon, an Arkham House writer who I greatly admire – 'LORD OF THE RINGS meets Thomas Pynchon', It says. It's nice to have Pynchon. I can live with that.

DARK SIDE: Have your experiences on NIGHTBREED put you off directing movies?

CLIVE BARKER: Not at all. I have movies of WEAVEWORLD and THE GREAT AND SECRET SHOW being scripted at the moment. I'm talking to John Carpenter about doing IN THE FLESH. THE LAST ILLUSION is currently being scripted, and I've just signed a two movie deal with Universal, so there's plenty of stuff to keep me off the streets. But the horror market now is less interesting to me than it used to be. You must remember that I did six books of short stories, I did HELLRAISER. I did THE DAMNATION GAME. I only published six years ago for the first time, so there was a lot of stuff in a short time – a lot of very visceral stuff in a short time.

So, while my imagination certainly has dark sides to it, I also have other ambitions. I also think that the generic divisions of horror, science-fiction and fantasy are actually extremely dubious. The overlaps are substantial. There are a lot of fantasy elements in the movies and the books that I've been involved in, and a lot of science-fiction in the fantasy books that I'm now writing. I think what happens is that publishers and movie distributors are obliged because of marketing procedures to divide the genre up very clearly. Okay, if you're writing a book called SLUGS then you can reasonably assume that Shaun Hutson wanted it to be a horror book (smiles). And there are certain pieces of genre material that are so on-the-nose that they cannot help but be what they are gonna be.

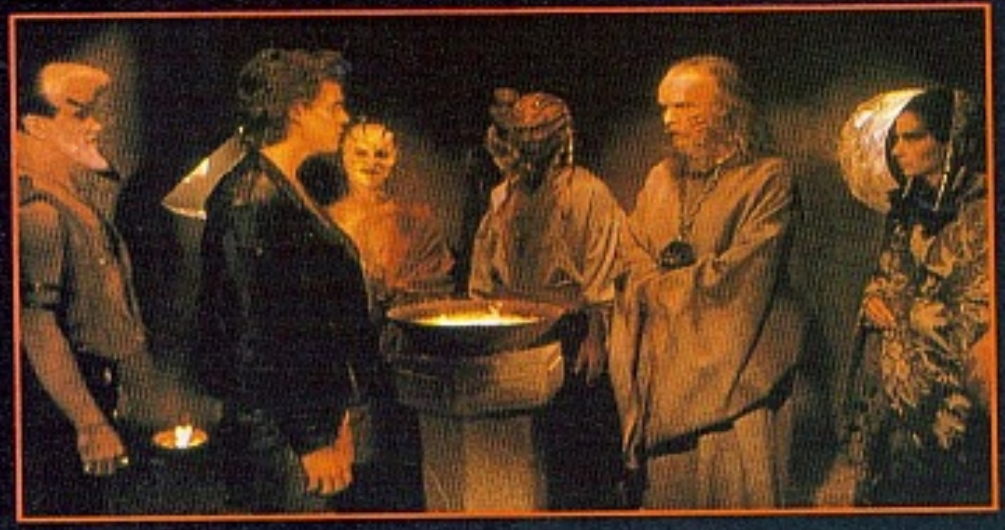
But there's a whole other area that is very much more ambiguous. In calling a movie a horror movie you may in fact be cutting out a whole area of potential audience who are just turned off because they've seen a package with a guy with an axe or whatever on it. It's something that I've solved or AM solving with my publishers, in the sense that once we started to look at the description of the kind of author that I was, and once we started to package books in a different way, the sales became astronomical. THE GREAT AND SECRET SHOW was eight weeks on the bestseller lists in America – I'd never had that sort of success before. I insisted we didn't put the Stephen King quote on the cover because I just felt, like, enough already, you know? It wasn't like Steve was describing the work I was writing. I just persuaded my Italian publishers to put Dario Argento quotes on my books instead.

DARK SIDE: I know you're a big fan of Dario Argento movies. What other horror pictures stick in your memory?

CLIVE BARKER: I loved many of the old Hammer films. THE DEVIL RIDES OUT, is a wonderful movie. I haven't seen it for a long time, but I seem to remember Charles Grey terrified me in the role of Mocata. He was as scary as hell. There was that wonderful moment when they were all in the circle with the Angel of Death galloping around. There's a tendency among horror fans to say how much better that scene would have been with today's special effects expertise, but I think we have to be careful of that, because one of the things which has cursed the movies recently is the sort of thing you get in the FREDDY pictures, where the effects are spectacular, but who cares, because they dwarf the characters. I think in a sort of way the simpler effects can be better. In neither NIGHTBREED or HELLRAISER are the effects hugely elaborate. You don't get the big ILM opticals because we couldn't afford them. I like the simpler stuff in the Hammer pictures. Of course, part of that liking may be sentimental. I saw these movies as a real youngster. I thought God was in his heaven when I got to see DEVIL RIDES OUT. My favourite double-bill, after PSYCHO and WAR OF THE WORLDS, was SHE and ONE MILLION YEARS BC, which I saw nine times in one week! I couldn't get enough of those heaving breasts in goatskin!

But having extrolled the virtues of all this, I had a look at TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA the other day, which I'd remember liking, and found it to be bloody awful! I guess we all move on...

Hellbound



Nightbreed

Hammer GLAMOUR

In the first of an irregular series we take a brief look at the ongoing career of one of our most underrated fantasy females: Caroline Munro.

If there were such a thing as an award for the title of First Lady of Fantasy Films, the firm favourite would have to be stunning dark-haired British actress Caroline Munro. She got into movies in the late 60s (via her eye-catching appearances in a series of 'Lambs Navy Rum' commercials), and then after a cameo in WHERE'S JACK? (1969), quickly cornered the market in playing space maidens, slave girls, sexy vampires, and maidens-in-distress. Even in non-speaking roles Caroline made an impact – remember her as Vincent Price's deceased wife in the DR PHIBES movies? She was particularly good in CAPTAIN KRONOS – VAMPIRE HUNTER, playing the title character's strong-willed assistant, but the studio then wasted her talents in the disappointing DRACULA AD 1972. After this came the main female lead in THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD (1975), a delightful fantasy adventure bolstered by memorable Ray Harryhausen effects. Caroline gave a spirited performance here, but for some mystifying reason, she wasn't snapped up by Hollywood overnight. Instead she found herself back toiling the low-grade horror field, starring opposite Joan Collins in a tacky black magic yarn called I DON'T WANT TO BE BORN. Shortly afterwards she became one of the fantasy females Doug Mcclure discovered AT THE EARTH'S CORE. But the big break she had been waiting for came in 1977 when she was signed up to play a Bond girl baddie in THE SPY WHO LOVED ME. Caroline's svelte helicopter pilot came to a sticky end trying to blow up Roger of-the-raised-eye-

brows Moore, but this high-profile part got her the lead in the Italian-made science-fiction epic, STARCRASH (1979), a latter day BARBARELLA featuring Caroline as space heroine Stella Star. She saved the universe from destruction in a variety of eye-catching costumes, but once the filmmakers had paid for those costumes they obviously didn't have enough money left over for any decent special effects! Disappointed at the film's lacklustre boxoffice performance, Caroline then returned to the horror field, playing the photographer heroine of the notorious gore epic, MANIA (1982). She also co-produced and starred in THE LAST HORROR FILM (1982), a minor chiller about a famed horror actress being pursued by a psycho against a backdrop of the Cannes Film Festival. The mid 80s found Caroline playing hostess on the TV game show THREE-TWO-ONE while appearing in the undistinguished Britsh chillers DON'T OPEN TILL CHRISTMAS and APRIL FOOL'S DAY (later retitled SLAUGHTER HIGH). Since then she has been conspicuously absent from our screens, but the good news for Munro fans is that the lady is back, as beautiful as ever in Jess Franco's LES PREDATERUS DE LA NUIT, a 1989 reworking of AWFUL DR ORLOFF which is due for release over here shortly. An exclusive Caroline Munro interview will be coming up soon in this very magazine. In the meantime, they say a picture is worth a thousand words, so here are four thousand on the first lady of British fantasy! ■

Caroline Munro

COMIC Crypt

The comic strip has always been a popular medium with both young and old alike – here Alan McKenzie reports back from the colourful world of Marvel and D.C.

There was a time, and I remember it well, when comics were for the sub-literate. The sort of folk who move their lips when they read and have ink-smudges on their index fingers. I wish I could say that things were different now. But they're not. For despite the efforts of a few gifted creators, and the publication of such ground-breaking works as **Batman: The Dark Knight** and **Watchmen**, comics, just like the fantasy film and the horror novel, still live in a ghetto, surrounded by the walls of prejudice.

That's not to say that most comics don't deserve it.

A visit to any specialist comics shop – and most large towns have one – will bring you face to face with wall after wall of product, from the latest air-freighted Marvels and DCs, to xeroxed amateur comic books with crude artwork and appalling grammar. Where to start is what keeps the beginners out and the small publishers small.

THE BIG CHEESES

The top selling comic just about anywhere is Chris Claremont's **X Men** for Marvel Comics Group. Claremont's been writing the title since 1975 and during that time it's averaged about 400,000 copies a month and spawned a number of spin-offs including the wildly successful **X-Factor** and **Excalibur**. The only trouble with the X-Titles is that it takes a new reader two or three issues to get into the storyline. Claremont's plots read like a teenage soap opera, sticking to the time-honoured formula created by legendary Marvel Supremo Stan Lee, tightening and adapting it to the current

Marvel Comics, creation of the legendary Stan Lee

audience, an average member of which I would picture to be a dude-ish fifteen year old Ameican male... as typified by the New Kids On The Block.

It's very fashionable among the fan-boys of the comic fanzine world to jeer at the work of Chris Claremont and writers like him. Which just goes to show that the cognisceti know no more about comics than the average Sun-reader in the street. **The X-Men** is a very tightly written book and is probably the most perfect example of a Marvel monthly comic in their entire range.

Other recommended Marvel books are **The Amazing Spider-Man** written by David Michelinie, and **The Incredible Hulk** by Peter David. I'd cautiously recommend Jim Starlin's **Silver Surfer** book as well. I always liked Starlin's **Warlock** and Captain Marvel books and the **Surfer** one uses great villains like Thanos, who is slated for a solo mini-series later in the year.

Special mention also for **The 'Nam**, Marvel's excellent (and only) war comic which is slated to chronicle the life and times of an ever-changing group of grunts as they make their uncertain way through the Vietnam War, in real time. That author Doug Murray was actually there at the time may have something to do with the authentic feel of the book.

Meanwhile, over at DC Comics, the two flagship titles **Superman** and **Batman**, along with their sister comics **Action** and **Detective**, seem to go from strength to strength. It's difficult to say for certain how well DC titles sell as they don't appear to publish their circulation figures once a year like Marvel.

DC titles worth checking out include Grant Morrison's **Doom Patrol** (I find his **Animal Man** harder going, though that may change now fellow Brit, Pete Milligan has taken over the book) and **Time Masters**, which features many second banana DC characters from the late fifties and early Sixties like Rip Hunter and Cave Carson, and does some interesting things with the concept of Time Travel. Biggest disappointment of the year was the revival of **Adam Strange**. Great art by the Kubert Brothers over a very ordinary script by DC resident Graphic Designer Richard Brunning.

The nearest thing DC has to Marvel's **X-Men** would be their **Legion of Superheroes** books, which I generally find unreadable, or their **Justice League** books which are written by the same author but are much more accessible. Artist Keith Giffen seems to be DC's star writer and as such has a great influence over many of their characters. There are two Justice League books, **...America** and **...Europe** and both are played chiefly for laughs. Giffen's redefining of Green (Guy Gardner) Lantern as a loud-mouthed braggart with a yellow streak is the centrepiece, though Giffen's Batman grabs the attention as a cold-blooded borderline psycho.

The other area DC excels in is the horror genre. The post-Alan Moore **Swamp Thing** by Doug Wheeler, along with the **Swamp Thing** spin-off, **Hellblazer** by Jamie Delano, and the ubiquitous Neil Gaiman's incomprehensible **Sandman** form the back-

Action-packed Animal Man

bone of the stable of titles administered by DC Editor and Foreign Talent Liason Karen Berger. It's all pretty grim stuff, these days, horror fans seem to want to be depressed rather than horrified. I gave up reading **Hellblazer** halfway through issue 3's "Yuppies from Hell" anti-Thatcher rant. Still and all, the recent **Hellblazer** fill-ins by Grant Morrison and the ongoing "Family Man" serial killer storyline by resident writer Delano have all been nothing short of entertaining. I'd like to see a **Hellblazer** story by John Smith sometime.

THE LITTLE CHEESES

Aside from the big two, there are many other smaller companies producing fine comic books. The American independent company Dark Horse has found a niche by licensing the characters from the recent Twentieth Century-Fox movies **Aliens** and **Predator** and has crafted excellent comics based on these concepts. The current offerings from this stable are **Aliens vs Predator** – inevitable but brilliant – and **Aliens: Earth War** which I'm saving untill I have all four issues before I read it. Can't recommend these highly enough.

Also consistently brilliant is First Comic's reprinting of the whole **Lone Wolf and Cub** by Japan's Kazuo Koike and Goseki Jojima. Already up to book 35 by the time you read this, the series looks like it will run forever. The nearest thing to literature in comics right now. If you hate Japanese samurai stories, you'll love this!

Spiderman and 2000AD

Saving the best till last, I can't sign off this column without praising Britain's own **2000 AD**. Top of the sales heap for 13 years, **2000 AD** sells about 100,000 copies per week and has been a valuable showcase for the cream of British talent since its inception in 1977. That I have the honour to be Deputy Editor of this illustrious organ and a personal associate of Tharg the Mighty has no bias over this stance at all. If I wasn't working on **2000 AD**, I'd be reading it anyway. That Tharg in his folly pays me to pore over its pages is a source of constant amazement to me. Worthy of special mention are the Herculean efforts of scripter John Wagner, who has guided the fate of **Judge Dredd** from Year One. The current "Necropolis" storyline is a pinnacle in the book's history, though Simon Bisley's artwork on the current run of **Slaine: The Horned God** is also phenomenal. Bisley's next assignment will be working from Wagner's script on the **Judge Dredd/Batman** team-up, to be co-published by DC and Fleetway. You read it here first. ●

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A FRIGHT AT THE OPERA

Beneath the catacombs of the Paris Opera House, something stirs... As Robert England swaps his Freddy mask for the stitched-on face of Erik Desler, Richard Marshall goes underground to discover how a creaky old silent movie became the stage and movie phenomenon of the 80s and 90s.

'He is extraordinarily thin and his dress coat hangs on a skeleton frame. His eyes are so deep that you can hardly see the fixed pupils. You just see two black holes, as in a dead man's skull. His skin, which is stretched across his bones like a drumhead, is not white, but a nasty yellow. His nose is so little worth talking about that you can't see it side-face; and the absence of that nose is a horrible thing to look at. All the hair he has is three or four long dark locks on his forehead and behind his ears.'

The above description is taken from 'a romantic horror story' entitled PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, first published in 1911 by Gaston Leroux, a popular writer of pulp potboilers. It alludes to the novel's main character, an unfortunate fellow named Erik who, according to the prologue of Leroux's tale, actually existed in real life: 'He was not a creature of the imagination of the artists, or a product of the absurd and impressionable brains of the young ladies of the ballet.'

Erik, the Opera ghost was born with such ugliness that even his parents were repulsed and terrified by him. Naturally the youthful Erik could not live in a house where his mother and father regarded him as a monster, so he ran away and joined a fair where an exhibitor put him to work. Erik became the fair's 'Living Corpse', eventually falling in with Gypsies and becoming an accomplished singer, conjurer and ventriloquist.

Leroux's biography then maintained that Erik travelled the world designing palaces and carrying out political assassinations (!). But eventually he got bored with all this excitement and decided to settle down to a more or less normal lifestyle. He constructed the Paris Opera House on a maze of catacombs, creating a 'dwelling unknown to the rest of the earth, where he could hide from men's eyes for all time'. According to Leroux, Erik died a peaceful and private death. His skeleton was later discovered in the cellar of the Opera House. But for the movies, the Leroux tale might have faded as easily into obscurity as Erik did. However, in 1923 Universal acquired the rights to film it as one of their most expensive, spectacular productions to date. The then-incredible sum of one million dollars was to be spent, most of which would go on the construc-

Lon Chaney the original phantom

tion of the Paris Opera House and the grim, gothic labyrinth beneath. At the time there was only one actor capable of interpreting the role of Leroux's Opera Ghost: Lon Chaney, the self-styled 'Man Of A Thousand Faces', who had the uncanny ability to alter his appearance in accordance with whatever grotesque part he had to play. The year before he had triumphed at Universal playing Quasimodo, the Hunchback of Notre Dame, and he was in truth the only choice for the part of Erik.

The original PHANTOM was a faithful adaptation of the Leroux story, with Chaney superb as Erik, the disfigured maniac composer (an escapee from Devil's Island) who ventures out from the catacombs beneath the Opera House to take a personal interest inthe career of understudy Christine Daae (Mary Philbin). The film was basically a beauty and the beast fable directed in the manner of a compressed cliffhanging serial by Rupert Julian, though in fact Julian never completed the project – his martinet manner alienated the cast and crew and Chaney insisted that he be removed, leaving the actor to direct his own scenes.

When PHANTOM was originally previewed, American critics told Universal boss Carl Laemmle that he had a turkey on his hands unless he offset the scary aspects with some comedy relief. So Laemmle brought in the comedian Chester Conklin and further footage was shot by Edward Sedgewick, a director known for his action films and comedies. Further unsuccessful previews took place, and in the end all this extra footage was removed.

The film received its official premiere on September 6th, 1925, and went on to become one of the biggest moneymakers of its year. In 1929 it was re-released with sound and an impressive Technicolor sequence where Erik attends a masque ball. But it is the original silent version that still commands the respect of film scholars and horror buffs everywhere.

Robert Englund - Phantom of the opera

Even today the original PHANTOM still has the power to shock audiences. In the film's most chilling scene the Phantom sits at the organ playing his own composition, DON JUAN TRIUMPHANT. Philbin is overwhelmed by curiosity and inches towards him, mustering the courage to touch his mask. At last she tears it away, revealing a living skull with deathly pale skin hanging against the bone underneath. So terrifying was the image that many members of the audience were reported to have fainted dead away!

When asked how he accomplished his remarkable Phantom makeup, Chaney replied: 'There are tricks in my particular trade that I don't care to divulge any more than a magician will give away his art. In PHANTOM OF THE OPERA people exclaimed at my weird makeup. I achieved the death's hand of that role without wearing a mask. It was the use of paints in the right places – not the obvious parts of my face – which gave the complete illusion of horror.'

CLAUDE REIGNS!

Realising they had a rewarding franchise on their hands, Universal later attempted to recapture some of the glory (and boxoffice receipts) of PHANTOM with THE LAST PERFORMANCE (1928), a silent thriller about a stage magician named Erik who boasts hypnotic powers. This was shot on the Paris Opera House set and also starred Mary Philbin. A cartoon image of Lon Chaney's Phantom turned up in THE HOLLYWOOD REVIEW OF 1929, and there was a picture called THE PHANTOM OF PARIS (1931), which was based on the Gaston Leroux tale, CERI-BIBI.

But it wasn't until 1943 that Universal got back to basics with a lavish remake of PHANTOM in lurid Technicolor and sound. Claude Rains took over the Chaney role (the great horror star had died of throat cancer in 1930), playing Erique Claudin, a violinist in the Paris Opera orchestra who suffers from arthritis and hopes to compensate for his loss of employment by selling his lifetime work, a piano concerto. But an unscrupulous publisher steals the manuscript and Erique has acid thrown in his face by the latter's secretary. Clutching his seared flesh, he flees to the catacombs beneath the Opera House, now hopelessly insane.

The rest of the plot concerns Erique's search for revenge and his nurturing of the career of budding opera star Christine (Suzanne Foster). Directed in a routine fashion by Arthur Lubin, a filmmaker better known for comedies and musicals, it stressed the spectacular aspects of the story rather than the grisly. The 'unmasking scene' which was the highlight of the original here became nothing more than the shock-cut unveiling

Susanna Foster, Claude Rains in scenes from the 1943 'Phantom'

of some unconvincing scar tissue marring one side of Rains' otherwise handsome face. But the film did deliver one particularly outstanding suspense scene where the Phantom contrives to drop a huge chandelier into the packed audience, creating pandemonium.

Most purists agree nowadays that though the Claude Rains PHANTOM is an exceptionally lavish production, it has too much opera and not enough scares. And though it did quite well at the boxoffice, it did nothing to remove Chaney's death's head image from the public's mind. Over the ensuing years images of Chaney's Phantom would turn up in THE MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES (the 1957 biopic on Lon Chaney) and the Woody Woodpecker cartoon, PHANTOM OF THE HORSE OPERA. There was also an episode of the TV show NIGHT GALLERY (called PHANTOM OF WHAT OPERA?) featuring AIRPLANE's Leslie Nielsen as the man behind the mask.

THE PHANTOM GOES TO LONDON

In 1962, England's Hammer Films joined with Universal pictures to ressurrect the Leroux tale, switching the locale from Paris to London and starring Herbert Lom as the title terror (their regular star Christopher Lee had turned the part down). Fully aware that its small-budget effort would be closely compared with the previous big-budget American versions, Hammer gave it their usual value-for-money production gloss. At first they hired professional maskmakers to design the Phantom's mask, but none of their concepts met with director Terence Fisher's approval. In the end makeup man Roy Ashton constructed a crude mask out of cloth, gauze and tape, which at least looked like something the Phantom might have made for himself.

This time around Christine was played by Heather Sears (whose singing was dubbed by opera singer Pat Clark), and the plot used was that of the 1943 version, with Lom being scarred by acid by an unscrupulous publisher (Michael Gough). In fact from this time forth most future versions of the story would hold to the concept of Erik being a good man turned evil by events rather than being hereditarily so.

Lom's scarred face was shown only briefly, and then it didn't look too convincing. In fact the Hammer Phantom disappointed on almost every level, being played for pathos rather than horror. TIME magazine scoffed: 'This new Phantom is about as dangerous as dear old granded dressed up for Halloween,' and Hammer were suitably embarrassed when the film netted an 'A' certificate in the UK.

But even though the Hammer version proved a flop, other incarnations of the Phantom continued to turn up onscreen throughout the next decade. These included Jack Cassidy's mad matinee idol haunting an old film studio in PHANTOM OF HOLLYWOOD, and Brian De Palma's PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE (1974), in which William Finley played a rock composer named Winslow Leach, disfigured in an accident in a record-pressing plant. The latter introduced Faustian elements for the first time, but was too much of an outrageous spoof on the music business to be particularly popular with the public.

THE MUSIC OF THE NIGHT

One might have thought that was the end of the Phantom saga as far as the movies were concerned. But Leroux's character was not to be given a chance to rest in peace. PHANTOM-fever hit with a vengeance in 1986 when Andrew Lloyd Webber's PHANTOM OF THE OPERA musical opened in London's West End to staggering success. Suddenly everybody was interested in the story again, and a whole generation who had never heard of Lon Chaney or Claude Rains were queuing up to hear Michael Crawford warble 'The Music Of The Night'.

Hollywood caught on quickly, and other Phantoms began to crawl out of the woodwork riding the coattails of the musical's success. The least opportunistic (it was filmed in 1983 before the musical opened), was a classy TV movie shot in Budapest with maximilian Schell as the deranged Hungarian voice teacher who wasn't just a pretty face, and Jane Seymour as the soprano, Christine. This benefitted from handsome production design, some excellent makeup by Stan Winston, and a literate screenplay by Sherman Yellen.

Less inspired were a recent four hour NBC TV movie starring Charles Dance and Burt Lancaster, and PHANTOM OF THE MALL, a low-budget chiller which updated the setting of Leroux's story to a modern day shopping mall. The title character here was a deranged teen (Derek Rydall), out for revenge on the greedy property-developers who destroyed his house in an arson attack and left him hideously scarred. Matthew Mungle's fine Phantom makeup was the only memorable thing about it.

FREDDY AT THE OPERA?

Certainly the most commercial of the new PHANTOMS, and one of the most entertaining, is the much-publicised version produced by Harry Alan Towers and starring Robert (Freddy) Englund as the man behind the mask. This PHANTOM OF THE OPERA thankfully abandons the pathos of the 1943 and 1962 films and goes back to the Lon Chaney original: 'Our goal is to show violence,' Englund told us with a characteristic Freddy chuckle. 'We wanted to make the Phantom with a little bit of Beauty and the Beast and Richard III thrown in.'

Robert Englund - Any requests?

Shot in Hungary on a value-for-money $6 million budget, this Phantom looks very much like it might have been made in the heyday of Hammer horror. But where the Hammer version soft-sold the gore, this goes with the flow of today's horror flicks and dwells on gory beheadings and loving closeups of Englund's character stitching his face on!

Jill Schoelen, Robert Englund

The film actually begins in the present day, with soprano Jill (THE STEPFATHER) Schoelen auditioning for a show singing the Phantom's long-forgotten music. An accident transports her to London in the 1880s and we're off on a scary re-run of a familiar tale crammed with some tongue-in-cheek 'Freddy-isms' from Englund to please his fans (example: 'How would you like a private box?' he asks a troublesome theatre critic before gruesomely doing him in!).

The film is a welcome return to the wonderful old gothic horrors of yesterday, stylishly photographed, and sharply directed by Dwight H. Little (whose previous HALLOWEEN IV did little to prepare us for the quality of his work here.) Englund himself is very pleased with the end result, 'The 1943 version was very romantic,' he says, 'emphasising the music, the opera, the humanness of the Phantom. You felt for him, but weren't really frightened by him. Our version is closer to the 1925 version, where Chaney was a wicked-looking guy who was a real threat.'

It remains to be seen whether the other Phantoms that are due to come our way soon will be equally threatening. Among the projects on the drawing boards are Wolfgang (THE BOAT), Pederson's PHANTOM, an ambitious reworking (by renowned playwright Dennis Potter) of the Leroux tale set in WWII Nazi-occupied France. Then there's Sam Raimi's DARKMAN, in which Liam Neeson plays a character based on the Phantom.

The major project is of course the film of the musical, with Joel Schumaker directing and Michael Crawford starring. But Universal – the company which started it all by purchasing the rights to Leroux's tale shortly after its publication in 1911 – have also recently announced plans to make their own new version of the story. Erik may have sunk lifeless beaneath the Seine, but it seems that the world has not yet heard the last of the man with the mask. ■

The Robert Englund PHANTOM OF THE OPERA was released on the Castle Video Label on September 27th.

A fight at the opera - Alex Hyde-White tackles Robert Englund

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CINEMACABRE

Alan Frank looks at the latest movie releases

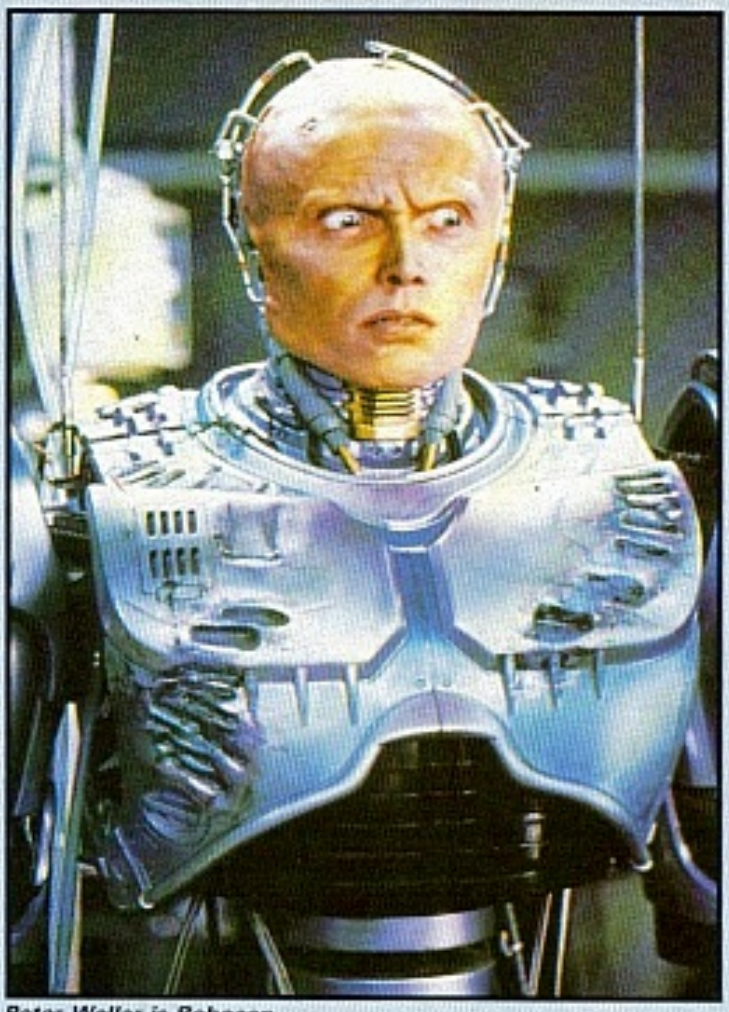
I learned little in my days as an advertising copywriter (apart from the art of creative lying), except that when inspiration failed the two most valuable words in the liar's lexicon and a surefire escape from writer's block were "New!" and "Free!" Movie titles, too, have their vital buzzwords. Once these were "Son of..." and "Return of ...". Now Hollywood believes that the secret of success is numerical: repeat the formula but add the magic word "Two".

Inevitably, then, we have **Robocop 2** and the return of cyborg policeman Peter Weller, still patrolling the decaying, dangerous streets of near-future Detroit with his partner Nancy Allen, to bring law and order to a city terrorized by vicious gangs of hoodlums high on the new designer drug, Nuke which makes crack resemble a children's tonic. Sinister, silky supervillain Dan O'Herlihy, head of the industrial conglomerate Omni Consumer Products, is back too and planning the ultimate commercial takeover by foreclosing on the bankrupt city and taking it into private ownership. (I only hope Mrs Thatcher never gets to see the movie!)

Naturally Weller is there to ensure that O'Herlihy fails. But he has problems of his own, not least when he is reduced to a disconnected pile of human and metal components by narcotics czar Tom Moonan's gang, and is rebuilt and reconstructed by O'Herlihy's scientist assistant Belinda Bauer who reprogrammes him to be unable to fight crime. Miss Bauer is also responsible for the creation of the eponymous Robocop 2 when she transplants the brain of sadistic drug-addicted Noonan into another super-cyborg and paves the way for the spectacular climactic battle between Good and Evil.

Robocop had several advantages over its successor. For a start the man-into-metal theme was fresh then. Secondly, by showing Weller's genesis from man into man-machine and his resultant emotional angst, you genuinely came to care for Robocop and what happened to him. This time the movie pays minimal lip-service to Weller's origins, so that when he literally falls apart and nearly dies you fail really to care about him as

Robocop 2



Peter Weller is Robocop

a human being, but instead simply feel about as concerned as you would be after taking, say, a vacuum cleaner to bits and then not being able to figure out how to reassemble it.

The third, and perhaps most important, missing element is director Paul Verhoeven. As he proved with **Robocop** and demonstrated again so successfully in **Total Recall,** Verhoeven never allows special effects to dominate at the expense of the human drama, but instead uses them brilliantly to advance the narrative without overwhelming it. Here Irvin **The Empire Strikes Back** Kershner is at the helm, and while he certainly scores with the plentiful action sequences, he does little to give depth to characterisation which is obvious and schematic. You almost expect the villains to wear black and twirl their moustaches, and I wouldn't have been too surprised to see Robocop don a white hat for the final showdown. As a result the movie rarely engages the imagination in the way **Robocop** did.

Jerry Zucker (**Airplane!, The Naked Gun**) goes solo as director with **Ghost** and falls on his feet where Spielberg fell flat on his face with **Always.** Both movies feature a dead hero, but that's where the similarity ends. Spielberg drenched **Always** with self-consciously cute whimsy and made it sugary enough to constitute a real danger to diabetics. Zucker, on the other hand, clearly understands how people old enough to cut up their own food behave and so, however fantastic the situations, his characters tend to be rooted in reality. Sentiment is there – it could hardly fail to be in a movie whose star is dead and is trying desperately to save the life of his grieving widow – but Zucker never allows it to get out of hand and instead concentrates on the comedy and thriller elements in Bruce Joel Rubin's nifty screenplay.

Patrick Swayze in Ghost

Whoopi Goldberg in Ghost

The premise is simple. Patrick Swayze is murdered but his troubles are only just beginning. He discovers that his wife, Demi Moore, is in danger and he can't get in touch with her to warn her – untill he manages to make contact with phoney medium Whoopie Goldberg who is, to put it mildly, more than somewhat shocked to find herself in communication with a genuine 24-carat spectre. Up to the entry of Goldberg, drama, rather than laughter is the order of the day, but from then on there is a great deal of entertaining comedy as well as excellent suspense.

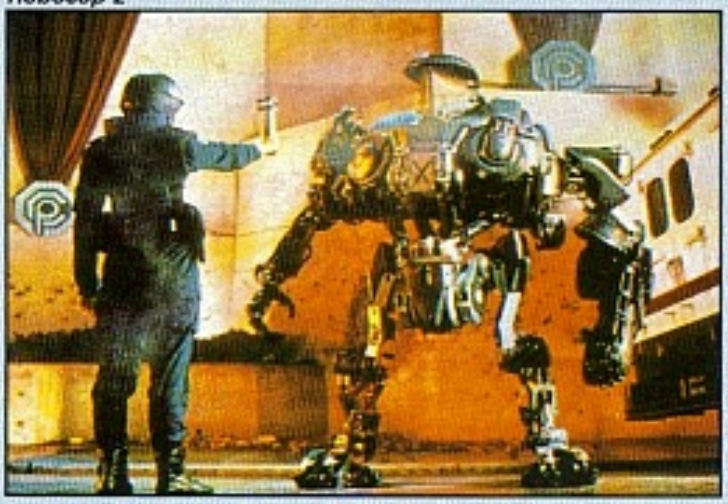
Goldberg, whose movie career has been going steadily downwards, bounces back triumphantly here. She's genuinely funny, and when she's around nobody else gets much of a look-in. Moore doesn't have to extend herself too much apart from suffering nobly over Swayze's untimely death and sparring with Goldberg who, not unnaturally, she regards as a fake when she turns up claiming to be in contact with her late husband, but what she has to do she does well. Swayze is just fine: he's convincing in his live scenes and believably vulnerable, confused and finally resourceful in the title role.

And look out for a winning cameo from Vincent Schiavelli as the violent ghost who regards the New York subway as his own personal territory and who teaches Swayze the spectral art of making his mark on the real world.

I enjoyed the movie a great deal: the plot is inventive and Zucker's handling is assured. He pulls off the not-too-easy task of combining the disporate comic, dramatic and suspenseful elements into an almost always smooth whole. Industrial Light and Magic's smart special effects are a considerable asset, notably when the ghostly Swayze passes through solid objects. This is slick, polished commercial filmmaking immaculately designed to be both a showcase for Swayze and a solid crowd-pleaser and its succeeds splendidly on both counts.

Having hit the celluloid jackpot with **Hellraiser,** Clive

Robocop 2



The monsters of NIGHTBREED

Barker sensibly doesn't stray too far from the formula with **Nightbreed.** This time the monsters are intended to be less threatening if no less startling. They are the movie's **raison d'etre** and, in this respect at least **Nightbreed** doesn't disappoint. Image Imagination have excelled themselves and created a bestiary of the kind that nightmares are made off. And, speaking of nightmares, the movie begins with an all-too-obvious, all-too-predictable dream sequence. I'm not against cliches **per se.** After all, the cinema depends on them. But this particular one now has whiskers on it and deserves a rest.

Adapting his novel **Cabal** for the screen, Barker provides plenty of plot centred on Craig Sheffer who, wanted for murder and on the run, is forced to hide out in a legendary hidden underground city in the wastes of Northern Alberta among a collection of monstrous shape-changers. Also involved in the not-always-coherent storyline is David Cronenberg, following his acting debut in Landis' **Into the Night** with a full-blown starring role as a sinister psychiatrist. Nice try David, but I would give up the directing job just yet.

Actually it's not entirely Cronenberg's fault that he seems less than comfortable in front of the camera: Barker's forte as a director is in creating shocks, suspense and atmosphere. His handling of actors is less assured and tends to vary in effect from scene to scene. That doesn't matter too much here since people are unlikely to be going to see **Nightbreed** for great acting. People expect Barker to scare them and he doesn't disappoint. Never mind the story, enjoy the chills.

David Cronenberg and Clive Barker

Barker, writing about his film in the production notes says: "My sense was that I had to work really hard to scare audiences. I had to put more solid 'jumps' in it than I did in **Hellraiser**– it's full of those cheap little tricks. But I had to make sure that when the monsters appear, the audience will warm to them despite their strangeness, and despite the fact that some of them are quite dangerous. If they simply bit and tore and turned to smoke and ripped people up, the audience was never going to come into their world There had to be an element of Tod Browning's **Freaks**, in which you saw there was a wit and a sly warmth to these characters. The balance to be achieved was to let humour undercut the scares".

It's one thing to write about what you intend to do and quite another to actually do it. I'm indebted to Barker for his comments but I did not read them until after I'd seen the movie. Hindsight is a wonderful attribute, much prized by critics, especially those who, years after the event, come around to reassessing movies. Without hindsight I thought **Nightbreed** was simply a straightforward shocker with impressive monsters and settings and moderate acting but hardly a trailbreaker. Now that I've read the background I see no reason to change my verdict. ■

HARDWARE.
Written & Directed by Richard Stanley. With Dylan McDermott, Stacy Travis, John Lynch, William Hootkins, Iggy Pop.
Palace Pictures.
Cert. 18.

Ambitious – perhaps overly so – feature film debut from young director Stanley, whose previous work has been in the pop video area. here he presents a low budget sci-fi/horror nightmare, heavily indebted to numerous post-apocalypse and post-modernist scenarios, ranging from ALIEN, MAD MAX and BLADE RUNNER to THE TERMINATOR, ROBOCOP and Dario Argento's classic INFERNO. Add to these influences a couple of crazed drug trips, graphic violence and obscene monologues from portly sleazeball William Hootkins and the end result is a bizarre cocktail which fails to ignite as often as it bursts into epic sickness.

McDermott (from HAMBURGER HILL) is a soldier of fortune who barters a partially dismantled killer droid from an enigmatic Nomad (Carl McCoy) and gives it to sexy metal-scultress Jill (Travis, from EARTH GIRLS ARE EASY). After she incorporates part of it into her latest opus, the Mark 13 reassembles itself and begins a murderous rampage through her flat, slaughtering anyone it comes into contact with. A cross between R2D2 and Giger's Alien, the Mark 13 is equipped with endless devices of destruction plus a lethal hallucinogenic injection, and proves more than a match for its various opponents...

Stanley's script and direction are chaotic to say the least. What really carries the film is Travis's excellent performance, far better than the average 'woman in jeopardy', and Hootkins' disgusting ranting and manic eyeball-rolling routines. Particularly noteworthy on the technical side are contributions from lighting cameraman Steve Chivers, another fine score from Simon Boswell, and Image Animation's make-ups and robotics design. Had Stanley exercised a tad more self-control in all departments HARDWARE would come highly recommended; as it is the film's indulgences and longeurs make it interesting and fairly enjoyable but plenty short of essential.

Stefan Jaworzyn

TWO EVIL EYES
Starring; Adrienne Barbeau, Ramy Zada, Harvey Keitel, Madeleine Potter.
Medua Pictures.
Cert. 18.

George Romero and Dario Argento join forces to bring us two separate Edgar Allan Poe stories, both updated to modern times. The opener is the lesser entry, Romero's 'The Facts In The Case Of M. Valdemar,' in which greedy Mrs Valdemar, Adrienne Barbeau, concocts an ingenious scheme to get her hands on her dying hubby's fortune. She gets her doctor lover to place the ailing Valdemar into a hypnotic trance, so he will sign over all his lolly. But the poor old chap pops his clogs before the new will becomes valid, and so they bung him in the freezer until all the documents can be sorted out. What they don't realise is that not having been brought out of his deep hypnotic trance, Valdemar is alive, even though he's medically dead. When the spell is broken, he returns for his revenge – and brings a few cobwebby pals with him!

A rather pointless update of a tale that was better handled in Roger Corman's 1963 TALES OF TERROR, this is far from hypnotic stuff that plays like a routine episode of Romero's TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE television show. Full of stereotyped characters and stilted chat, it only livens up during the eerie climax, which is bolstered by some modest Tom Savini gore effects and the arrival on the scene of a small army of sinister-looking mannequin zombies. Otherwise it's a real disappointment from a director of Romero's proven ability.

Savini has a much greater contribution to make to the second episode, Argento's version of that old Poe favourite THE BLACK CAT. This stars a dishevelled Harvey Keitel as Rod Usher (!) an alocoholic photographer who specialises in recording grisly murders. When his violinist girlfriend Annabel (Madeliene Potter) brings home a stray black cat, Rod takes a paranoid dislike to it and determines to use it as a star performer in his new book, "Metropolitan Horrors." Setting his camera on automatic, he strangles the cat and records its death throes!

Of course when Annabel finds out about this, she realises what the audience had known from the start: that Rod's marble collection is sorely incomplete. She attempts to leave, and in a blind rage he chops her up with a meat cleaver and stashes her away behind a false wall in their apartment. In the meantime another black cat has appeared on the scene, only this one has a strange birthmark on its chest – in the shape of a hangman's noose...

Shot in Argento's usual fluid fashion – the camera swooping about Keitel's apartment like a thing possessed – this is splendidly on-target right up until the contrived final sequence. References to other Poe works abound: In the opening scenes Keitel stumbles across a naked female body sliced in two at the waist by a razor-sharp pendulum, and later on Tom Savini makes a guest appearance as a psycho who has pulled all his girlfriend's teeth out (a-la 'Berenice'). Performancewise, Keitel is memorable as the barmy Rod, and there's a nice interplay between he and the jaded cop (John Amos) who finally finds him out ('Whenever we meet, there's always a dead body'). It's worth sitting through the mediocre Romero episode to get to this lurid mini-masterpiece of gothic terror.

Allan Bryce

■

Q: What do the following authors & artists have in common?

Douglas Adams Brian Aldiss Isaac Asimov
Iain Banks Clive Barker David Brin John Brosnan Jim Burns Ramsey Campbell
Angela Carter Joy Chant Simon Ian Childers Adrian Cole Edmund Cooper Louise Cooper
Richard Cowper Roger Dean Terrance Dicks Thomas M Disch Stephen Donaldson Harlan
Ellison Chris Foss David Gemmell David Gerrold William Gibson Charles L Grant
Harry Harrison Frank Herbert James Herbert Philip E High Robert Holdstock Shaun Hutson
Diana Wynne Jones Jeff Jones Peter Jones Mike Kaluta Colin Kapp Leigh Kennedy
Bernard King Nigel Kneale Harry Adam Knight Katherine Kurtz David Langford
Stephen Lawhead Anne McCaffrey Ian Marter Rodney Matthews Michael Moorcock
Chris Morgan Larry Niven Frederik Pohl Jerry Pournelle Terry Pratchett
Christopher Priest Robert Rankin Kim Stanley Robinson Michael Scott Rohan
Geoff Ryman Josephine Saxton Bob Shaw Robert Silverberg Brian Stableford
Theodore Sturgeon Patrick Tilley EC Tubb Lisa Tuttle Freda Warrington Ian Watson
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PRINTS OF DARKNESS

John Brosnan boggles his mind on the latest S.F., Fantasy and Horror books.

First, a warning. There will not be much fantasy reviewed in this column. There will be *some* fantasy, yes, but it won't be the type of fantasy that is known as 'sword and sorcery'. That's definitely out. Anything with elves, fairies, goblins, dragons, princesses, barbarians, swordsmen, swordswomen, wizards, sorcerers, witches, magic rings and, most particularly *quests*. So, no books, for example, by David Eddings or David Gemmell (but I will make an exception for Terry Pratchett). And that's that.

Sorry, my decision is final so you can stop all the crying and snivelling. If that's your favourite reading material I'm sure the kindly editor will occasionally bring in a guest reviewer who can stomach reading the stuff and sort it out for you in one go: "...*The Crystal Cats of Gwynlund* is the 24th volume in author Damon Campbell's epic series about Alphonse the Leprous Minstrel's search through the multi-worlds of Pu for his magic gardening fork..." That sort of thing.

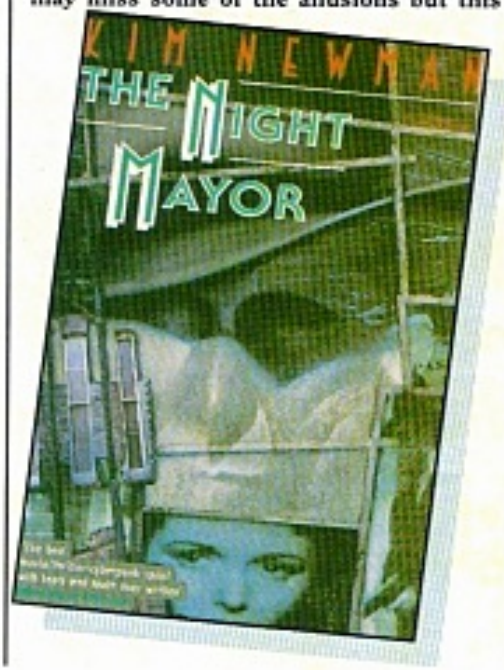
Now onto more serious matters. A good science fiction novel or story should boggle your mind as you read it. You should be able to put it down at the end and say to yourself or your cat, "Good Lord, my mind feels well and truly boggled!" It rarely happens but I have here three sf books that boggled my mind as I read them. My experience could have been due to the heatwave but I don't think so – I'm pretty certain it was due to the books.

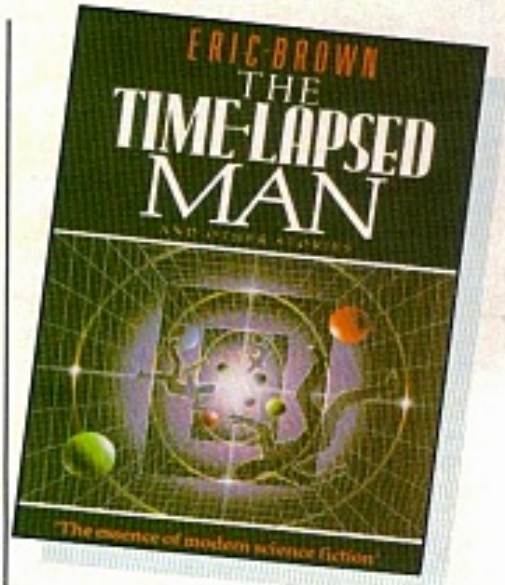
The first title to boggle the old brain was Kim Newman's *The Night Mayor* (NEL, £3.50). It's all about this evil megalomaniac, Truro Daine, in the future who figures out an ingenious way to escape from prison: he retreats into his own private dream world, inextricably linked to a giant computer network, which is based entirely on old, black and white crime movies.

A professional 'Dreamer' – someone who creates dream experiences for public consumption – is sent in to get him out, but the Dreamer, Tom Tunney, who enters the dream in the persona of his private eye character, Richie Quick, becomes overwhelmed by Daine's movie world and ends up thinking he *is* Richie Quick; his true identity forgotten. The authorities draft in another pro-Dreamer, a woman this time, Susan Bishopric, who enters the dream as a quick-thinking, aggressive female character '... Something between Gene Tierney in *Laura* and Ella Raines in *The Phantom Lady*.'

Daine's world is a disconcerting one: it's black and white for one thing, you can't swear (because no one swore in those old movies), you're liable to experience a 'fade out' during car journeys and the whole place is populated by old movie actors such as John Carradine, Gloria Grahame, Lee Marvin, Dan Duryea and Elisha Cook Jr. Susan is confident at first that, as a professional Dreamer, she will be able to handle Daine but learns, during their first confrontation, that Daine is virtually God in this world and can do anything he wants. Even when she turns herself into Godzilla she is bested by Daine and it's only when she teams up with Tom Tunney that Daine's threat to expand his baleful influence to the real world is stopped.

Kim Newman is a film critic – you may have seen him on Channel 4's breakfast programme – so his novel is packed with cinematic references and in-jokes. Those readers not as familiar as him with the *film noir* movies of the 1940s and 50s may miss some of the allusions but this won't spoil one's enjoyment of an exuberant, richly inventive SF novel.

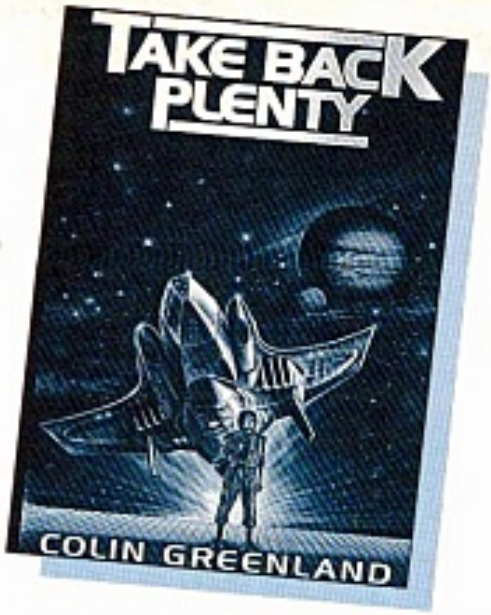




The most brain-boggling story in Eric Brown's collection, *The Time-Lapsed Man* (Pan, £3.99) is the title one. Thorn, a starship engineer, literally becomes a 'time-lapsed' man when, as a result of his work, his senses begin to go out of synch. At first it's his hearing that becomes delayed by several hours, and then his sight and sense of taste are similarly affected. In his hospital bed he has increasingly bizarre experiences such as eating his breakfast without any taste, then tasting and smelling it some hours later. The sequence where he feels his former girlfriend makes invisible love to him hours before he actually *hears* and *sees* her making love to him really boggled my mind. The rest of the stories by this new young British writer are of a high standard, even if they don't reach the heady heights of the first one.

Colin Greenland, another British writer, has produced two previous fantasy novels (*serious* fantasy novels, not that sword and sorcery rubbish I mentioned at the start) but *Take Back Plenty* (Unwin, £6.99) is his first SF novel and it comes as a surprise because it's a fast-moving, action-packed space opera full of brain-boggling ideas.

It starts off small, with Tabitha Jute, owner of an ancient space barge, getting drunk on Mars and becoming involved with a shady but handsome musician who hires her and her ship, and ends with Tabitha

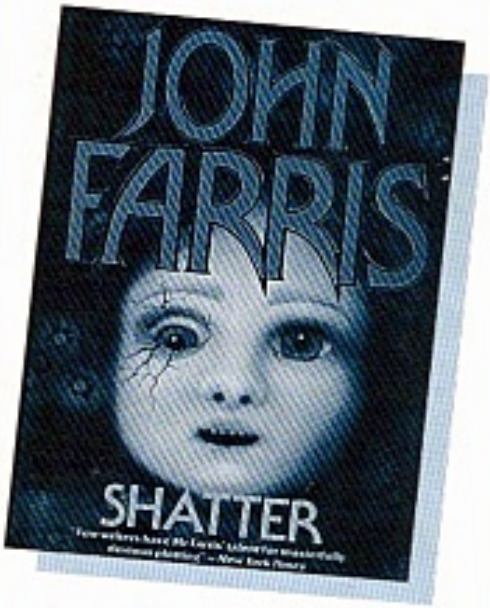


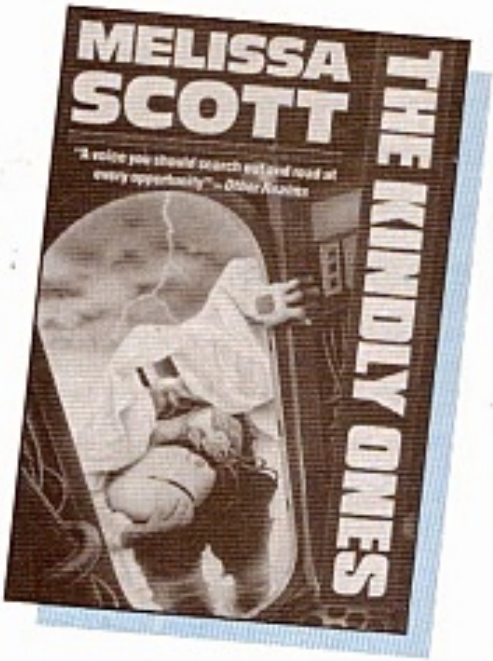
being instrumental in cosmic events that will change the destiny of the human race. The only criticism I have of the novel is that Greenland interrupts the slam bang narrative flow with several flashback conversations between Tabitha and the intelligent computer, Alice, who controls her ship. I confess I started to skip these as the story progressed (as they're in larger type they're easy to spot). Otherwise *Take Back Plenty* is a lot of brain-boggling fun.

Nothing to strain the old grey matter in *The Kindly Ones* (VGSF £3.99) by Melissa Scott; on the contrary my brain shut down completely several times while I was reading this and I fell into a deep sleep. I've read one of her previous novels, *Five Twelfths of Heaven*, which didn't impress me much but had a good central idea – a future where alchemy is used to power starships – so I thought I'd give her a chance. Teach me to be such an old softie. Not that it's a *bad* book. It's simply a nondescript book and you wonder why Ms. Scott bothered to write it.

It's set on an icy, harsh planet, Orestes, where the human colonists have developed complicated and strict codes of social conduct which involve people being declared socially 'dead' if they break the code. From then on they are invisible to the rest of 'live' society. The story concerns a feud between two of the ruling families of the planet which leads to outright war and an end to the code.

The three main characters caught up in the conflict are all women and virtually interchangeable – and are all pretty dull. But I will say this for Ms Scott: she has provided all us writers with a new thing for characters to do. You know what I mean: 'He nodded.' 'She grimaced.' 'He stared at her'. 'She flushed.' 'He snorted.' 'He hesitated.' 'She gasped.' And so on. Well, the characters in this book do their faire share of nodding, grimacing, staring, flushing, snorting, hesitating and gasping, but they also do something else – they *shake*. As in 'She shook herself.' (page 8), She shook herself hard.' (page 10), 'I shook myself then.' (page 32), Guil shook herself hard.' (page 38), 'Guil shook herself then.' (page 45), 'I shook myself' (page 61), 'Ash shook herself, managed a smile.' (page 73), 'I shook myself, hard.' (page 99)... and so on throughout the book. Ms Scott's characters may be dull but, boy, do they *vibrate*.





Gollancz have put *Shatter* (£3.50) by John Farris in their horror category but though Farris is one of the top American horror writers, and this is an exciting and nerve-wracking book, it is not strictly a horror novel, but more a straight thriller.

In Germany, ex-model Anneliese Girda first receives death threats, and then terrifying encounters, with a mysterious group of people; while in America David McNair learns from his beloved father, pillar of the community and all that, that he has a guilty secret in his past – a murder, no less. While on a trip to Germany years ago his father murdered a German woman who had become his lover. Farris ingeniously ties these two narrative strands, and much else besides, together and produces a wholly satisfying climax. Well up to his usual high standard of writing.

The collection of stories, *Blue World* (Grafton, £4.50) by the relatively new horror writer, Robert R. McCammon are all horror, with the exception of the title story, 'Blue World', which is actually a short novel about a priest, a porno star and a serial killer (who could fail with a mixture like that?).

The horror stories are all of a pretty high quality but the ones that stand out are 'Yellowjacket Summer', which is reminiscent of the Jerome Bixby classic, 'It's A Good Life', 'He'll Come Knocking At Your Door', where a new family to a small town learn the unpleasant truth of why everyone there, including themselves, has such marvellous good luck, and 'Something Passed By', a harrowing description of the total breakdown of what we affectionately call 'reality'.

Finally, as I promised at the start, I will make an exception for Terry Pratchett and draw attention to his new book, *Eric*, (Gollancz, £7.99), even though it is full of such things as wizards, demons, goblins and all those other things I normally can't stand. Pratchett stands apart from other so-called fantasy writers in that he writes about such matters with wit, humor and intelligence, using the Disc World and its inhabitants to make pertinent comments about our own world, and our ideas about the universe. *Eric* is a large format book lavishly illustrated, in full colour, by Josh Kirby, Pratchett's usual cover artist. Recommended.

COMPUTER SLAYGROUND

Fantasy, horror and adventure lurk close beneath the surface of your computer screen. Dungeon Master Chris Knight dares you to switch on and take up the challenge.

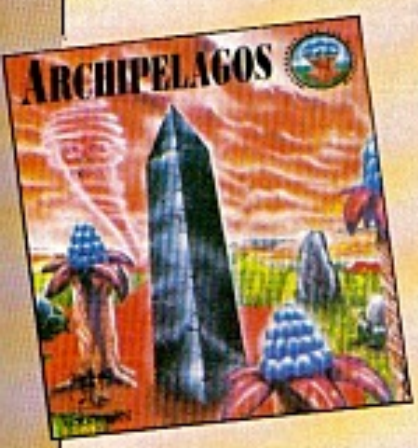
Some eight years ago, deep down within the clear blue waters of the Aegan Sea a group of underwater archaeologists unearthed a collection of springs and interlocking cogs which, after months of careful investigation, they could only conclude to be the remains of the earliest computer known to Mankind.

In a barbaric age, when slicing open certain anatomical appendages was the most popular pastime, it is not certain what the Greeks were doing with such an incredibly advanced piece of equipment, but it certainly lends weight to the old adage that fact is, indeed, far weirder than fiction.

What they were not doing with it, however, was developing pieces of software.

The Greeks, despite their precocious mathematical and philosophical knowledge, could never envisage the world as we see it today but, with the advantage of hindsight and a fair amount of imagination from the programmer, the worlds of the Ancients are well within the grasp of our joystick or mouse.

What is all this leading up to? Well, it's pretty neat run-up to an excellent offering from Logotron Recreation called Archipelagos, and if you thought there was no such thing as terror without violence, the fate of the ancient inhabitants of this strange world should put you right.



The setting is a blissful group of islands, tens of thousands of them in fact, all created by the powerful thoughts of this age old race, where they could meet and relax.

It sounds idyllic but, having throught up a whole new civilisation on the mysterious clouded planet in the northern skies, they soon discovered that their new creations wanted a slice of the action down below.

All of the Ancients' efforts to de-imagine their new 'Visitors' cut no ice at all, instead, it led to their downfall. As the Ancients sat in their splendour, down came the Visitors and cast their souls into hell. Their blood was drained into the soil and the idyllic life in Archipelagos was left perverted.

Where do you fit in? You've got to get in there and destroy the evil influence left over the islands by the visitors by smashing the symbol of their power-the Obelisk.

There are an incredible 9,999 different landscapes in this package, each with their own Obelisk. To make matters even worse, each obelisk derives its power from more stones scattered about the island, a couple to start with on the small archipelagos, with daunting numbers on the larger ones.

The stones are destroyed by linking them through a landpath to the main Obelisk and then draining them of their energy. On your way, you need to beware of the Necromancer, a ghost of the twisted and mutilated bodies of the Ancients, Blood Eggs which threaten to eat the very ground you stand upon, whirwinds and evil trees sent to infect the soil with blood and drain your energy.

Using excellent 3D graphics and continuous smooth scrolling, Logotron have created a chilling world of torment and terror which is very difficult to leave once you've entered.

Moving quickly on from the lonely wastelands of the Ancients, and for those of you who like your horror a little less subtle, Escape From Hell could be right up your street.

In this devilish production from Electronic Arts, you play the part of computer programmer Richard, transported to Hell to rescue your girlfriend Alison and partner Alan. Nice scenario.

On the way you'll bump into all sorts of blood crazed savages who wouldn't mind a little taste of your blood, as well as some blood crazed savages who wouldn't mind sucking out your bone marrow.

You will also bump into some likely characters such as Ghenghis Khan and Stalin, who will do their best to help you in your quest.

In good old roleplaying tradition, you have the choice of action in each encounter. Are you going to just kill everything in sight, or make use of the text-style conversation filling the main window to glean information from the underworld inhabitants. The choice is yours.

Despire the dramatic storyline, some of you might find Escape From Hell a litle slow going. The game package carries a startling warning concerning 'nudity, violence and controversial images', which should really be taken with a pinch of salt, considering the contents.

On a fast PC, Escape From Hell is a good example of a 2 dimensional scrolling roleplay, with an interesting mix of text, icon and adventure, but it certainly won't scare the socks off you.

One that just might, however, is Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, on Mike Woodroffe's Horrorsoft label. A couple of scenes from the dems hould give you a rough idea of the content; a grisly head emerging from a boiling cauldron and a very comely vampire gerring it through the heart with a stake. Keep your ears open for the noises as the stake goes in. Definitely not for the squeamish!

Based upon the vampish buxom beauty from the States, the game centres around the evil Queen Emelda's efforts to come back from the dead by doing away with our busty heroine, and features some truly atmospheric music on the Amiga format, as well as some excellent sampled sound and animated combat.

With icon and keyboard controlled gore nicely keyed in with the graphics, this will be a must for blood and guts fans when it emerges towards the end of Autumn.

If that all sounds just a little too gruesome, Elite's Ghosts 'n' Goblins provides some marvellous spooking in a more lighthearted style. OK, so the scenario is a little familiar-heroic knight goes out to rescue beautiful maiden from the clutches of demonic Overlord-but the gamplay is everything.

Ambling through eerie graveyards, deserted castles and deep, dark dungeons, you'll come up against stiff opposition in the form of zombies, dragons, killr flies and a whole host of other ghouls, all out to knock you clean out of your armour and suck you dry. Very tasty indeed.

With a choice of weapons to deal out death, you'll need to be fast to make that rendezvous with the Overlord after struggling through more than 100 different screens. The stunning effects and graphics make this package extremely good value for money, and it is also great fun into the bargain.

From the worlds of horror and fantasy, here's something for S-F lovers from Domark.

One of the major problems for owners of the cheaper 8-bit machines is that, as game scenarios become more and more complex, like some of those already mentioned, there just isn't enough memory for smaller machines to cope, which means you don't get to see the games on your format. It's a tough old life, but there you go.

The good news for 8-bit owners, however is that Escape From the Planet of the Robot Monsters, Domark has come up with a Sci-Fi clasic that looks good across all computer formats.

What's the story? The evil, scaly Reptilons have abducted lots of beautiful Earth girls and whisked them away to their

ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS

mysterious Planet X. I'll leave it to your imagination as to what they are doing to them up there but, in between, they are forcing the lovely lasses to create a Robot Army destined to destroy the Earth. Shock! Horror!

Yes, it's all good, clean fun, and as a two player shoot-em-up, Robot Monsters will be hard to beat. As Jake or Duke, you've got to get into the Reptilon factories and basically blast hell out of every alien you see in your quest to rescue the luscious Professor Sarah Bellum and the other hostages.

Take a long look at the map, and then forge your way through some stunning graphics. Listen out for the marvellous sound effects as you gun down the bigger baddies at the end of every third level.

On the 16-bit versions, yup, you miss out again 8-bit owners, you get the chance of a lifetime ride on a cyber sled between each of the factories. You've got thirty seconds to zip through the maze to the next sector. Win and you can choose your next destination, but if you lose, the computer will decide, which could be very detrimental to your health.

You'll get bonus points for every full shuttle of hostages you send Earthbound, and by picking up the crystals left behind by the dead Reptilons, you'll get even more fire power to blast your way through to the final factory.

If you get that far, give yourself a pat on the back; it's certainly not easy. What it is, is an action packed adventure that'll keep you glued to your screen until the early hours of the morning.

To round off this month, how about a little swashbuckling fantasy in the form of Ivanhoe from Ocean.

Showing your prowess with these five different areas: English forest; Boat to Europe; Ride from France to Austria; The Austrian town and finally, the Castle, your mission is to rescue good King Richard from his Austrian kidnappers and return him to England, to resume his rightful position as King.

King John, his wicked brother, is none too impressed with all this, however, and his archers will need to be dealt with fairly rapidly if you want to succeed.

As a friendly hint, try to move slowly throughout the levels, or you'll find a host of adversaries tumbling down upon you. With evil warlocks, pirates, dragons and other hideous beings out there in this fantasy world, it's not a good idea to let them gang up on you.

Ivanhoe features some superb cartoon-style animation, with some exceptional special effects when you get to use the bonus weapons hidden around the playing arena.

Whether you're into horror, S-F or, fantasy, or just straightforward baddie bashing, this little package wraps it all up into one very, very playable adventure. If you don't believe me, part with a small amount of your well-earned cash and get out fighting for King Richard yourself.

If you dare, that is.

Title	Software House
Archipelagos	Logotron Recreation 071 359 3594
Escape From Hell	Electronic Arts 0753 49442
Elvira-Mistress of the Dark	Horrorsoft 021 352 0847
Ghosts 'n' Goblins	Elite 0992 55852
Robot Monsters	Domark 081 780 2222
Ivanhoe	Ocean 061 832 6633

THE DARK SIDE COMPETITION CRYPT

This month we have a bargain bundle of ghoulish goodies to give away to the more knowledgable of you lucky fiends out there. And to save you having to queue up at the ghost office, we've set up a hellish hot-line for you to phone your answers across.

*A triple-pack of terror kicks off with Terry Pratchett's magnificent new **DISCWORLD** novel, ERIC (see John Brosnan's column for review), ten copies of which have kindly been donated by **VICTOR GOLLANCZ.***

*Next we have ten of **OCEAN'S MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE**, a stormer of an arcade conversion which invites you to join Earth's resistance fighters in their crusade against the awesome powers of mad scientist King Crimson and his army of mutants. Watch out for those mechanised snakes, lethal circular saws, giant fighting machines etc!*

*Finally, **MEDUSA HOME VIDEO** have donated ten copies of **BASKET CASE 2**, which is not a follow-up to **THE WICKER MAN**, but rather a deliriously daft (and horrific) story of brotherly love set in a house of freaks.*

*All you have to do to win one of these great prizes is to stick your bony claw into the telephone and dial 0898 345997. You will be asked a series of questions concerning recent horror releases, and if you answer correctly your name will go forward for inclusion in the prize draw collection. Be warned that the questions aren't easy. But you can enter as many times as you like, for all three competitions. **IT'S EASIER THAN WRITING OUT A GHOSTCARD!***

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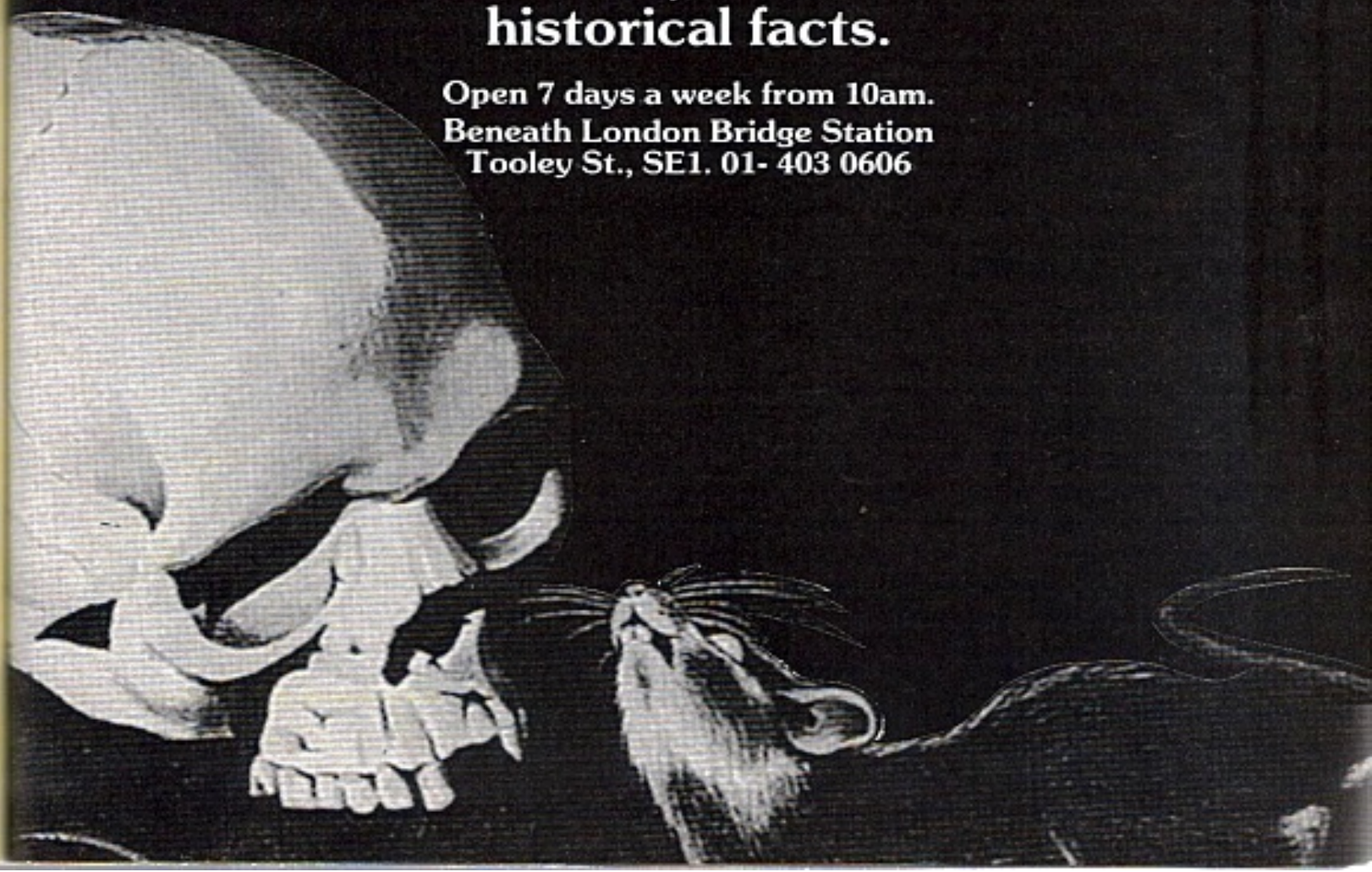

Our resident witch Hadria Hemlock stirs the cauldron and sees what's coming for you in the month ahead. Yes, it's a big hairy monster with very sharp claws and... arrrgggghhhh!

horrorScope

CAPRICORN
22nd Dec – 19th Jan

Not an easy month for the Goat. You'll need a lot of energy and a lot of courage – particularly if you live anywhere near Elm Street. Health and vitality are good. You could see your fortunes taking a turn for the better, and after the 18th you are going to be much in demand and highly popular.

AQUARIUS
20th Jan – 18th Feb

An association with somebody both rich and generous is on the cards – so there will be no more going overdrawn at the blood bank. You will be attracted to sports, but be careful of injuries. Watch your tongue in the first week – it might get you in trouble.

PISCES
19th Feb – 20th Mar

The Fish may be floundering in panic because of money problems this month. But help is on the way from a partner, possibly involving promotion at work. You will be popular with colleagues, and a health worry will be cleared up.

ARIES
21st Mar – 19th April

The Ram is quite impossible this month. Luckily, partners will be tolerant of your egotism and boundless enthusiasm, but be careful what you say to strangers, especially if they are carrying a revving chainsaw! Work holds unexpected surprises. A good month for winning on the pools!

TAURUS
20th April – 20th May

The Bull is obsessed with his physical condition this month, though he may overdo it at the dinner table around the 9th – cannibals beware stuffing down those baked beings on toast! There may be a senseless rift with a loved one around the 5th. A passionate fling is on the cards for the 11th or 12th, just remember that movie, FATAL ATTRACTION...

GEMINI
21st May – 21st June

A month for taking risks, but don't overtax that nervous energy. Too much rushing around with too little sleep is just the sort of thing that put cousin Drac six feet under. Definitely a month for getting lots done.

CANCER
22nd June – 22nd July

Home life is very important for the Crab this month, especially after the 18th. Remember that a smile can turn away a sword – though I wouldn't test this if you see Freddy Krueger coming at you. Your bank balance will start getting better, but keep it to yourself.

LEO
23rd July – 22nd Aug

Pride comes before a fall, so beware of flaunting your success too much this month. Remember what happened to Dr Jekyll – he had to pay double poll tax! There's an irrational desire for the fairway on the 4th. Think about it carefully before dashing off.

VIRGO
23rd Aug – 22nd Sept

Money, money, money... Watch that spending this month. If you're tempted to borrow on the 4th, don't! Too heavy a workload could weigh you down, so be careful to get your vitamins and be in your coffin by sunrise!

LIBRA
23rd Sept – 22nd Oct

The sun is back in Libra to balance the scales. Mr Hyde is out of sight this month and friends will flock to Dr Jekyll's charm. You're ready for self-advancement, so get on with that correspondence course or those night studies.
5th. A passionate fling is on the cards for the 11th or 12th, just remember that movie, FATAL ATTRACTION...

SCORPIO
23rd Oct – 21st Nov

Don't worry about that birthday. We all have them – apart from Frankenstein's monster of course – and this one is going to be fun. You will be obsessed with other people's secrets, but don't be rude to subordinates around the 4th, or your career may suffer.

SAGITTARIUS
22 Nov – 21st Dec

M.O.T. that broomstick, because there could be serious travelling on the horizon, or news from a distant friend after the 18th. Finances are stable, so maybe you should take out a deposit on that house in Amityville after all. You're tempted to gamble more than usual on the 4th. It could be your lucky day, so go ahead!

COMING NEXT MONTH!

Our Halloween special has plenty of tricks and treats in store. THE DARK SIDE goes lean, mean and green as we look at those TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES and chart their transition from the comics page to the big screen. We also talk to much-maligned EXORCIST star Linda Blair, and find out what makes Italian horror maestro Dario Argento tick. Delve deeper and you'll find exclusive interviews with cult filmmakers Jose Larraz (VAMPYRES), and the legendary Harry Alan Towers, who reveals what it's like to work with Klaus Kinski and Jess Franco. Also on the macabre menu: all the latest news and reviews from the world of movies, books, video, comics and computer games; new fiction from Stephen King and James Herbert, and lots more spooky stuff we haven't even thought of yet! If you haven't been sensible enough to subscribe, you will find issue 2 of THE DARK SIDE on sale at your local newsagent from October 25. Don't leave the crypt without it!

Cadaver™

Deep in the heart of darkness lies a swamp. In the centre of the swamp there stands a castle. And deep inside the castle the Necromancer waits.

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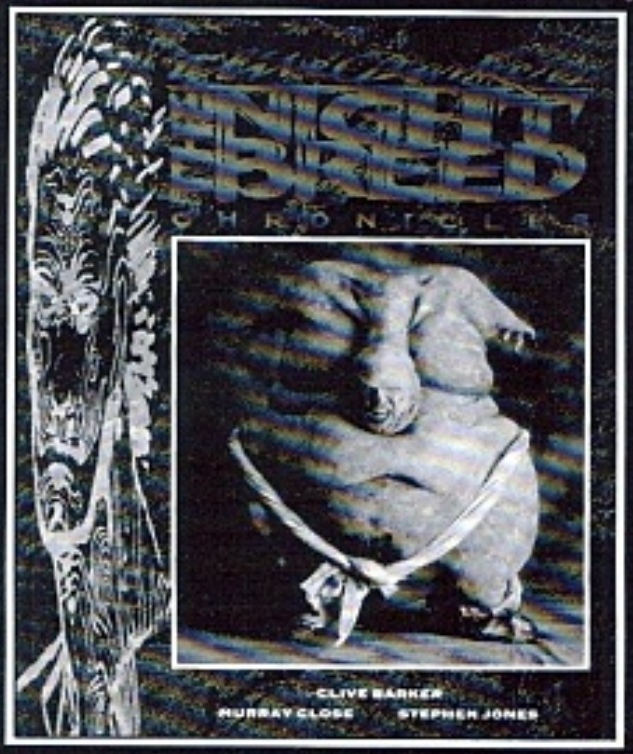

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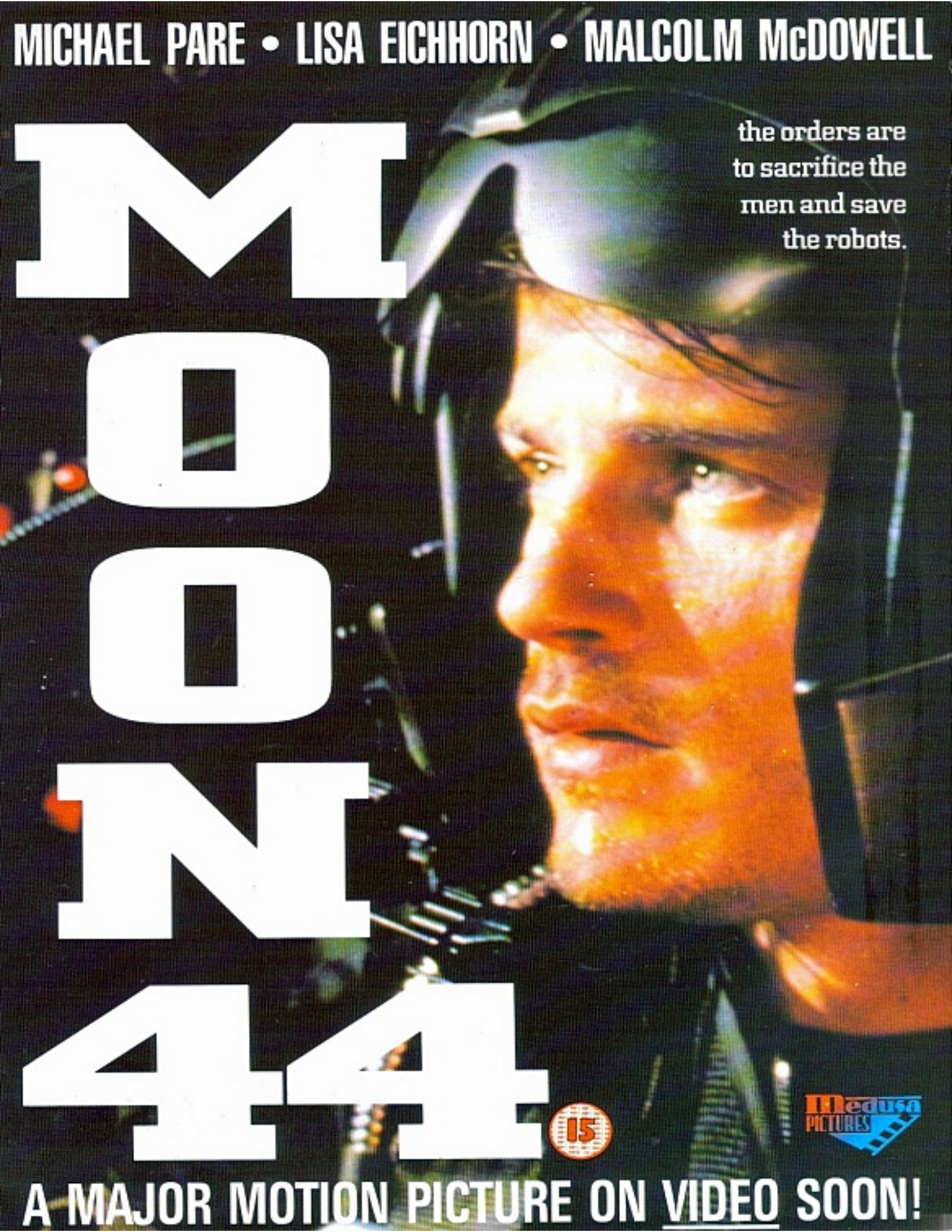
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